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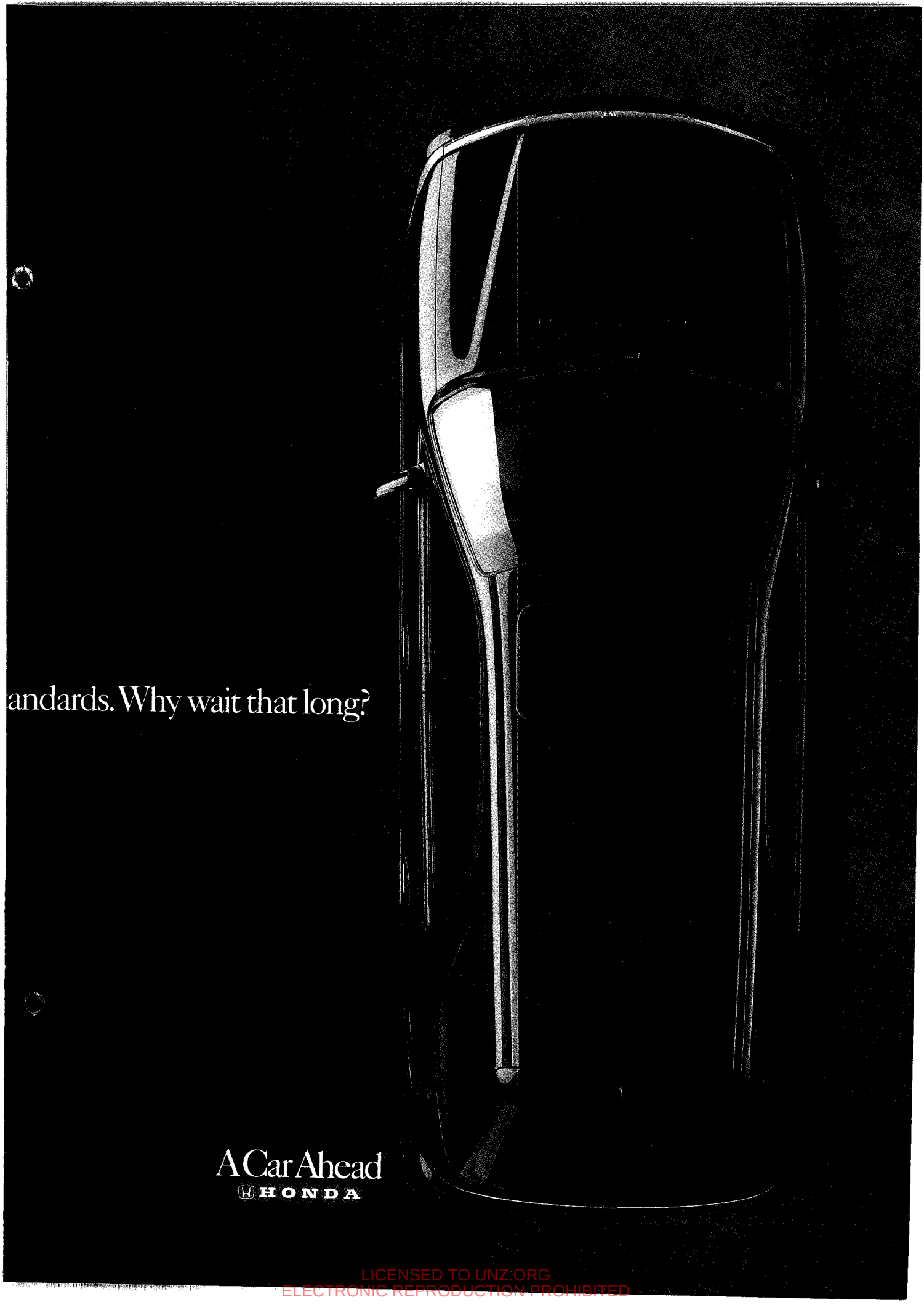

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THE NEW YORKER

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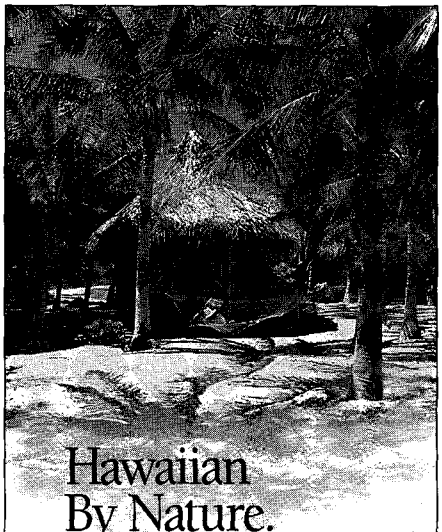

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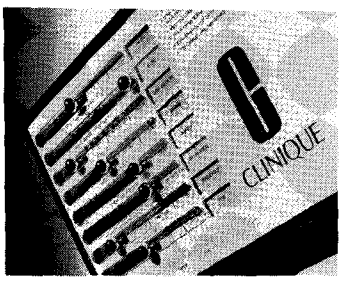

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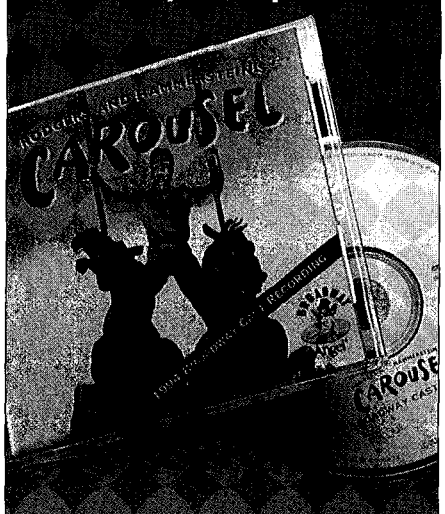

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EARTHBOUND

Did the moon landing turn out to be a giant leap to nowhere?

THE first moon landing looked old even when it was new. The half-billion people who watched Neil Armstrong's "small step" onto the lunar surface were presented with a black-and-white palimpsest—a ghostly image so tentative that they could see right through Armstrong's space-suited form to the crudely rendered lunar landscape beyond. As he and Buzz Aldrin loped about in lunar slow motion, they seemed to belong less to the future than to the past, like blurred figures in a Mathew Brady photograph.

Twenty-five years later, the landing of Apollo 11 remains conceptually distant, as imposing and inchoate as the overgrown Roman ruins in which eighteenth-century artists painted the outings of oblivious picnickers. Perhaps the leap was just too vast for us to make sense of. "We" did it—we Americans—yet the moon landing dwarfs us. We gaze back at it "as a savage looks at a ship," to borrow Darwin's words, and are quick to turn away. In a scenario that even the resourceful science-fiction writers of the fifties never anticipated, men went to the moon—and then stopped going. The Apollo program was cut short at eleven of a planned fourteen missions.

Nor has Apollo been followed by anything of comparable majesty. As the twentieth century draws to a close, no gleaming moon rockets emblazoned with the Pan Am logo are poised at spaceports for the weekly excursion to the Copernicus Crater Hilton, no roughhouse mining towns in the lunar highlands are refining Helium-3 for export to fusion reactors in Brazil, no flinty-eyed astronomers in serene observatories on the far side of the moon are plumbing the depths of cosmic space. There's nothing doing on the moon at all, and the American space program, such as it is, remains stalled in low Earth orbit. Aside from a few triumphs like last December's superlatively able repair of the Hubble Space Telescope, the space shuttle has fulfilled the 1976 prophecy of the M.I.T. physicist Philip Morrison—that it would be "a big, ugly egg" and would eat up resources better spent on sending probes to all the planets. (One of the few such probes that did get built was the Galileo probe, which has turned out to

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have the only cameras capable of taking direct photographs of last week's titanic explosions of comet fragments on the dark side of Jupiter.) As for the space station, still on the drawing boards nearly fifty years after Wernher von Braun and his colleagues first sketched its outlines, it has no clear mission except to maintain jobs in the aerospace industry and give the shuttle crews somewhere to go.

What happened?

Public disaffection with the space program is frequently blamed by editorial writers, who argue that the Vietnam War brought disenchantment with high technology in general and with the space program—a program descended, after all, from the German V-2 project—in particular. (To the title of an American film celebrating von Braun, "I Aim at the Stars," somebody once added the acerbic subtitle "But Sometimes I Hit London.") Yet the public has consistently supported the space program over the years, with surveys showing a widespread belief that space exploration is in the interests of all humanity. The National Aeronautics and Space Administration, meanwhile, has sought to equate space exploration with the activities of the space shuttle, which orbits at altitudes that have been aptly described as a ninety-minute drive in your family car if you could drive straight up. (A road trip to the moon would take six months.) If that's space exploration, then you should be able to get Jacques Cousteau to film your next dip in the pool.

It's easy to blame NASA for promising too much, delivering too little, passing the buck, and otherwise acting like what it is—a bloated, middle-aged government bureaucracy. Nevertheless, a look at the history of exploration shows that Americans were not the first to boldly go forth and then timidly retreat. It may be that we are an exploring species, as the proponents of manned spaceflight like to proclaim. But we are also a stay-at-home species, and we have punished explorers as often as we have celebrated them. Marco Polo and Columbus both wound up in jail, and many a grand campaign of exploration has culminated not in acclaim but in disgrace.

A century before Columbus sailed, the Chinese were launching vast voyages of exploration. The scope of these enterprises approached that of the Apollo project; in the year 1391, for instance, fifty million trees were planted in Nanking alone to provide wood for ships. Fleets carrying from twenty to thirty thousand men navigated the Indian Ocean to the east coast of Africa and as far south as Madagascar. Others may have sailed across the Pacific; the sinologist Sir Joseph Needham believes that Chinese explorers reached Chile. Nobody really knows how far they got, though, because in the waning years of the fifteenth century the blue-water junks were outlawed and their logbooks burned, on the ground that they contained "deceitful exaggerations of bizarre things." A few popular books of the period, based on some of the logs, have survived; one is entitled "Marvels Discovered by the Boat Bound for the Milky Way."

Whether we today are bound for the Milky Way is very much in doubt. The space program needs a goal. The logical goal is Mars, an Earth-like planet that could eventually be transformed into a second home for humanity. In 1989, President Bush committed the nation to a Mars mission, and now President Clinton has invited the coöperation of the Russians, whose spacefaring experience dovetails with our own. Getting to Mars would be expensive—at least a hundred billion dollars, and much more to establish a permanent base there—but the toughest problem is the political vulnerability of long-term planning. It might take decades to launch a proper Martian expedition, the better part of a century to explore Mars and determine whether there is or ever has been life there. (The dry lands of Mars equal those of Earth in area.) No Earthly institution is capable of managing such an effort over such a time span.

Meanwhile, we're stuck—as far from the moon as ever, and less capable of getting there than we were a quarter century ago. It's as if the moonwalkers, with their wooden words and their awkward steps and their flags suspended on wires to simulate the Stars and Stripes waving in the wind, had reached the end of a long and brittle branch, and the branch had since broken off. Americans reminiscing about past glories can visit the Johnson Space Center, in Houston, and snap photographs of the gigantic Saturn V moon rocket on display on the lawn. It's not a model, by the way, but a real spaceship. It never flew. NASA scrapped it, and built the shuttle.—TIMOTHY FERRIS

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IN THE MAIL

POWER TRIPS

As a survivor of the Holocaust, at Buchenwald, I found myself deeply disturbed by Lucinda Franks' article "Return of the Fugitive," about the antiwar activist Katherine Ann Power (Annals of Crime, June 13th). My sympathies lie entirely with Ms. Power, because I, too, was blamed for a crime I did not commit, in Nazi Germany—for the long-ago death of Christ, which led to the unmerciful slaughter of six million of my fellow-Jews. Katherine Ann Power, who was six blocks away from the scene of Officer Schroeder's murder, is being punished for her courageous stand against the government of the United States for its illegal military action in Vietnam and for forcing young men into the military against their will.

I resigned my commission in the United States Air Force in protest against the war; as a military-intelligence officer, I was well aware of the illegal actions of my adopted nation. At worst, Katherine is guilty only of poor judgment. As she languishes at MCI-Framingham, at a cost of many thousands of dollars a year, she serves only as an example of how corroded the American justice system has become.

ELIZABETH M. DANIELS
Ocean Park, Maine

I read "Return of the Fugitive" yesterday and decided to wait before writing in order to let my anger subside. What in the world was Lucinda Franks thinking when she decided to glorify Power's life? While Power hung out with her counterculture allies, living a life in which her main fear was having to reveal who she really was and then possibly having to face up to the fact that she was an accomplice to a cold-blooded killing, the Schroeders had to live with the reality that their father died because some punk helped kill him for no reason other than to enhance her standing with the radical left.

I, too, protested the war. It didn't take much to see that all causes and movements draw their share of people more interested in personal gain. Katherine Ann Power was no idiot. I will always believe she knew exactly what she was getting into.

MARK G. MAZZIE
Santa Fe, N.M.

SMOKED OUT

The Comment "Blowing Smoke" (June 13th) suggests that since smokers die earlier than nonsmokers they use less medical care and thus keep down health-care expenditures. However, my own research, published in *The Milbank Quarterly* in 1992, shows that for the average smoker expenditures on medical care over a lifetime are thirty-two per cent higher among males and twenty-four per cent higher among females than they are for people who have never smoked. Smokers use more medical care at all ages, and the excess expenditures incurred while they are alive exceed expenditures during the prolonged lives of those who have never smoked. Willard Manning and his associates published a paper with similar findings in 1989 in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*. They estimated lifetime medical-care costs of smoking at a minimum of twenty-six cents per pack of cigarettes in 1986 dollars.

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The state of Florida is correct: smoking does cost the Medicaid program money. Almost twelve per cent of the cost of smokers' medical care is paid by Medicaid; it comes to twenty-two billion dollars, in 1990 dollars, over a five-year period. The cost to Medicare is even higher—thirty billion dollars. When it comes to smoking, people who have never done it are both healthier and cheaper to take care of.

THOMAS A. HODGSON, PH.D.
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
Hyattsville, Md.

SCIENCE AND ETHICS

I am currently studying for my Ph.D. in physics and so read with interest George Steiner's review of two biographical works on Einstein (June 20th). I was disturbed by Mr. Steiner's exasperation over "the almost imperative indifference of science to the social and ethical consequences of its applications." I would argue that it is absolutely imperative to maintain and nurture this indifference.

Scientific inquiry is guided by one thing: truth. Its means are the search for truth and its ends are the understanding of it. A by-product of this process is technology, and it is in the production of technology rather than in the practice of science that ethical and social issues must be considered. Scientific knowledge always provides necessary but not sufficient conditions for a given piece of technology to be developed. For example, it is conceivable that we could have been aware of mass-energy equivalence and yet not have developed the atomic bomb.

Mr. Steiner claims that the progress of research in physics poses a threat to the planet. I agree that there is a threat, but it comes from those who by confounding science and its technological applications would have us give up the search for fear of its consequences.

ANDY JOHNSON
Golden, Colo.

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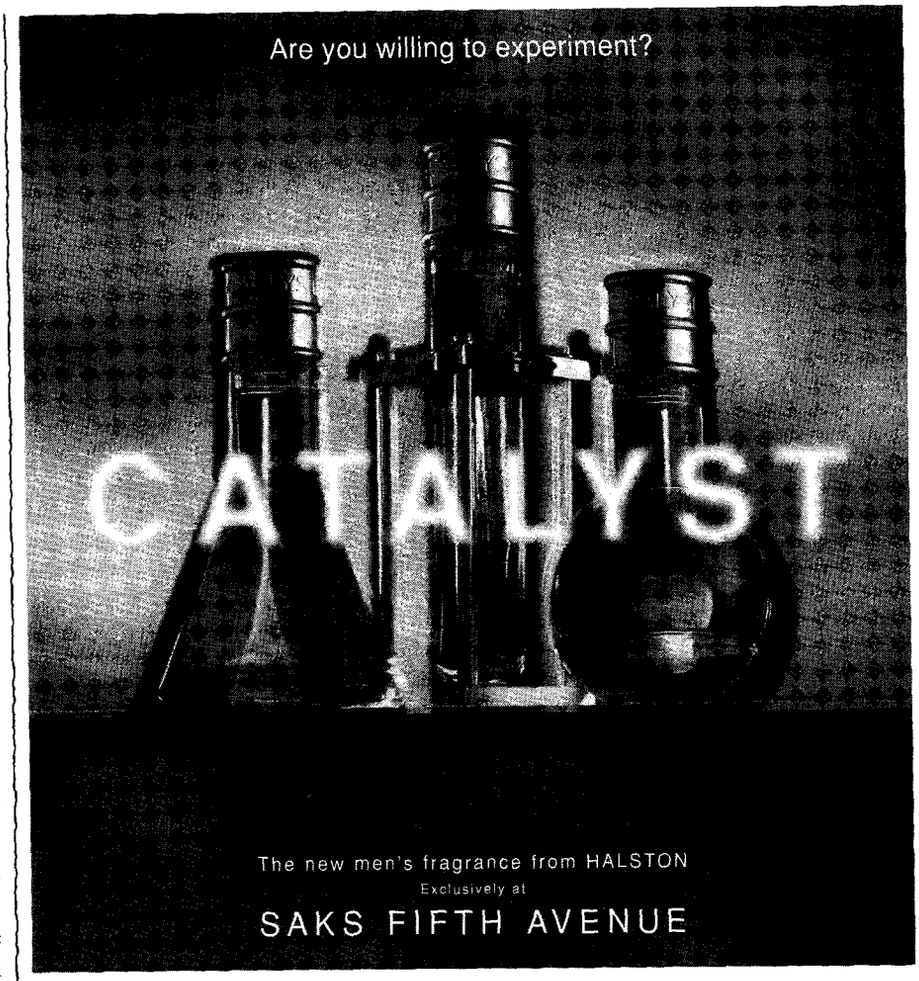

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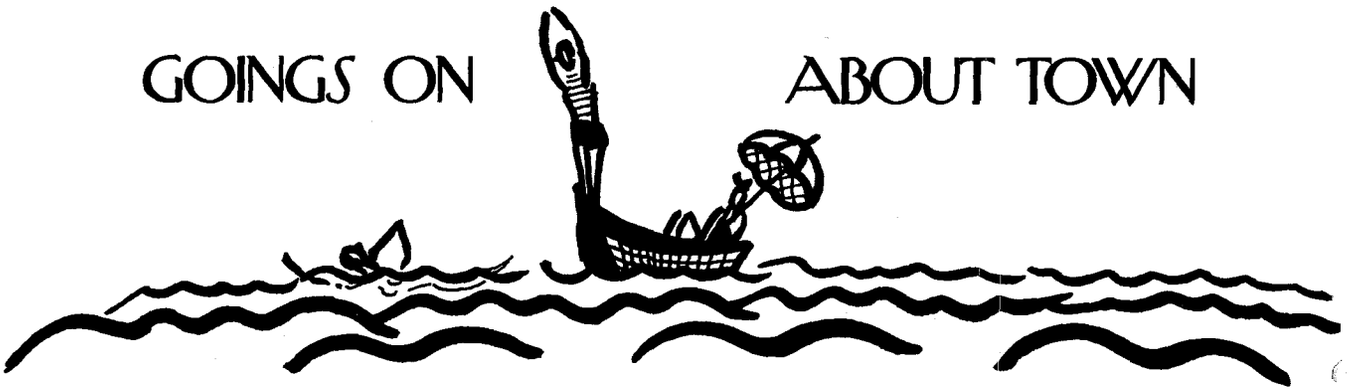

THE THEATRE

New Dawn

THE concept of opera singers crossing over into popular song was invented long before stentorian tenors began crooning Sinatra songs in stadiums. Whether the crossover takes place outdoors or in the studio, it is generally an artistic disaster: affected, preening, overblown. Occasionally, however, an opera singer strikes gold in the popular repertoire. The latest to do so is the American lyric soprano Dawn Upshaw, whose "I Wish It So," an album of musical-theatre songs by Blitzstein, Sondheim, Weill, and Bernstein, will be released next week by Elektra Nonesuch. (A Broadway concert of the songs is in the works for September.)

As a recording artist, Miss Upshaw is a newcomer to this music, and she brings a beginner's freshness to the material, as well a firm concern for the lyrics. A girlish "That's Him," from "One Touch of Venus," a fervent "Take Me to the World," from "Evening Primrose," and a Barbara Cook-clear "My New Friends," from "The Madwoman of Central Park West," are only a few of the unaffected pleasures on "I Wish It So." Miss Upshaw says, "I didn't want people to consider this 'Dawn's crossover album,' with everything that that usually means."

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OPENED RECENTLY

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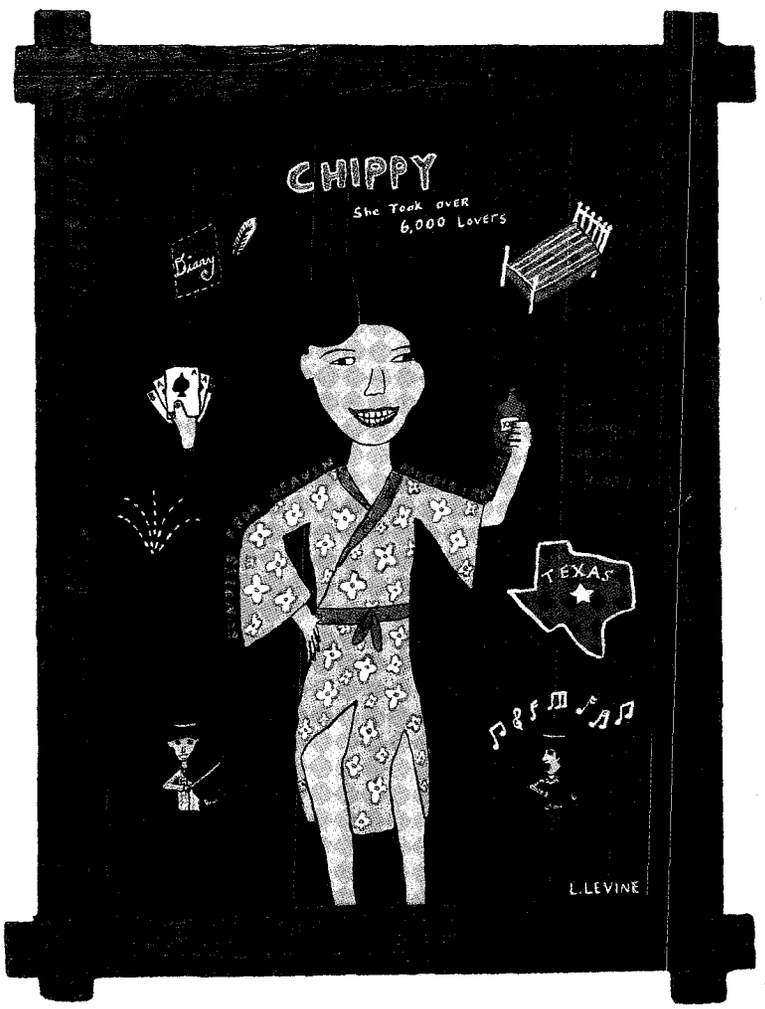
ALL IN THE TIMING—Six sparkling short plays by David Ives add up to one enchanted evening. Ives and the deft director, Jason McConnell Buzas, are wonderfully served by their actors, especially Robert Stanton and Nancy Opel. (John Houseman, 450 W. 42nd St. For tickets, call 239-6200.)

BEAUTY AND THE BEAST—Disney's Broadway money-spinner, adapted from the animated-film version, has a few moments of solid-gold theatrical amazement: the showstopping "Be Our Guest" production number and the Beast's transformation into the Prince. Directed by Robert Jess Roth. (Reviewed in our issue of 5/2/94.) (Palace, Broadway at 47th St. 307-4100.)



Jo Harvey Allen in "Chippy: Diaries of a West Texas Hooker," at Serious Fun!

BIRDBONES—In a one-man show that had a brief run last winter at the Kitchen, Dudley Saunders tells the story of a poor Southern single woman and her two children. The characters are chronically abused and down on their luck, but Mr. Saunders' writing and his performance have power, humor, and grace. (HERE, 145 Sixth Ave., at Spring St. 647-0202. Closes Aug. 13.)

CAROUSEL—Nicholas Hytner's authoritative direction combines with Bob Crowley's inspired sets to transplant the National Theatre's 1993 smash hit onto the Vivian Beaumont stage. Bold, beautiful, and controversial, this multicultural reinterpretation launches Rodgers and Hammerstein toward the twenty-first century. (Vivian Beaumont, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.)

DAMN YANKEES—The big musical hit of 1955 is back, in its first Broadway revival, with Victor Garber as the Devil and Bebe Neuwirth as Lola. George Abbott and Douglass Wallop's book has been jarringly updated by the director, Jack O'Brien (with the help of the hundred-and-six-year-old Mr. Abbott). The result is a vehicle that swerves between fifties stodginess and nineties cynicism. But the cast delivers Richard Adler and Jerry Ross's music with sporty energy, and Rob Marshall has created some lively dance numbers. (4/4/94) (Marquis, Broadway at 45th St. 307-4100.)

THE FAMILY OF MANN—Theresa Rebeck, a Ph.D. who has written for sitcoms, has written a play about a Ph.D. who writes for sitcoms, and it isn't pretty: megalomaniacal producers, go-along-to-get-along writers, craven network honchos, sexism by the megadose. No surprises here, but Ms. Rebeck's portrait of the funny-horrible good old boys' world of TV land has the vividness of sharp reporting and the satisfaction of revenge. The cast, directed by Pamela Berlin, includes Julie White, David Garrison, Robert Duncan McNeill, Anne Lange, and Chandra Wilson. (Second Stage, Broadway at 76th St. 873-6103. Closes July 30.)

GREASE!—The talented cast and the inventive production team show off the gleeful phonyness of Jim Jacobs and Warren Casey's musical with unembarrassed affection, and the result is a fun fake that's not trying to pass as the real thing. Rosie O'Donnell is very likable as the tough-talking Rizzo, and Billy Porter blows the lid off the joint with his Little Richard-like rendition of "Beauty School Dropout."

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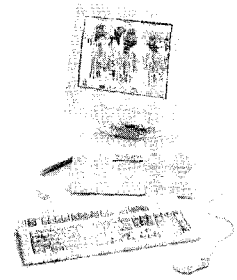

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Chandra Wilson and Julie White in "The Family of Mann."

The set, a riot of Day-Glo colors, is by John Arnone, and the lighting and the witty costumes are by Howell Binkley and Willa Kim, respectively. Jeff Calhoun directed and choreographed. (5/30/94) (Eugene O'Neill, 230 W. 49th St. 239-6200.)

Hedda Gabler—An unintelligible production of Ibsen's play, set, for no apparent reason, in America in the late forties. As Hedda, Kelly McGillis shows a lot of naked dentition and tosses her head around as if she were straining at an invisible bit. Jeffrey DeMunn's hyperactive performance as her abstracted academic husband seems to have been inspired by "The Nutty Professor." Laura Linney and Patricia Conolly give good supporting performances, but they have nothing to support. Directed by Sarah Pia Anderson. (Roundabout, Broadway at 45th St. 869-8400. Closes Aug. 7.)

Hysterical Blindness and Other Southern Tragedies That Have Plagued My Life Thus Far—An autobiographical musical-comedy revue written by, and starring, Leslie Jordan. It's a tale of growing up Tennessean, thespian, and gay. Joe Patrick Ward's energetic musical numbers run the gamut from corn to gospel. Directed by Carolyne Barry. (Playhouse on Vandam, 15 Vandam St. 691-1555.)

An Inspector Calls—J. B. Priestley's 1945 mystery is not really a play—it's a speech, about every man's link to every other man. The fine cast, which includes Kenneth Cranham, Philip Bosco, and Jane Adams, has ideas, not actions, to play. Directed by Stephen Daldry. (5/16/94) (Royale, 242 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

Jackie Mason: Politically Incorrect—A former rabbi from a family of rabbis, Mason uses the stage as his bully pulpit. Behind his shtick, which is sometimes vulgar but always funny, is a fundamentalist disgust at the world's fraud, wickedness, hypocrisy, and inhumanity. (4/25/94) (Golden, 252 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

The Manchurian Candidate—John Lahr's adaptation of the Richard Condon thriller, presented by the Art & Work Ensemble. (Theatre Row Theatre, 424 W. 42nd St. Closes July 30. For reservations, call 925-3960.)

Our Town—The National Asian-American Theatre Company presents Thornton Wilder's play. (Vineyard Theatre, 108 E. 15th St. Closes Aug. 6. For information about tickets, call 675-0767.)

Passion—Stephen Sondheim and James Lapine's listless epistolary musical, in which the main characters spend much of their time singing love letters to and from each other. Jere Shere and Marin Mazzie are in fine voice as a dashing soldier and his lover, and Donna Murphy gives a stunning performance as Fosca, the predatory heroine. Lapine, who wrote the libretto, directed. (5/23/94) (Plymouth, 236 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

Sanctifying Grace—It has been seventeen years since his last confession, and Colin Quinn, actor and standup comedian, is doing a humorous one-man excavation of his old Irish neighborhood in Brooklyn. At the wake of a friend ("That's where the party is"), with a coffin as centerpiece, Quinn offers up a brutally funny portrait of a block where alcohol, drugs, and regret are bountiful. Quinn co-wrote the piece with Lou DiMaggio. Robert Moresco directed. (Irish Arts Center, 553 W. 51st St. 757-3318. Closes Aug. 7.)

Shango de Ima—Choral singing, dancing, live percussion, and a colorful set inflect this Yoruban mystery play, creating a celebratory mood that aptly expresses its Afro-Cuban religious roots. The versatile cast, directed by Rome Neal, depicts scenes from the lives of seven African *orishas* (deities), who show that, though divine, they are susceptible to vanities, just like the mortals over whom they preside. Written by Pepe Carril. (Nuyorican Poets Café, 236 E. 3rd St. 465-3167.)

Stomp—A group of eight British rhythm specialists who use unconventional percussion instruments. The noise is terrific. (Orpheum, 126 Second Ave., at 8th St. 477-2477.)

subUrbia—In his one-man shows, Eric Bogosian looks hard at himself in the mirror; in this play, he holds a mirror up to a group of angry and aimless twenty-somethings who hang out in the parking lot of a suburban 7-Eleven, and asks, "What's wrong with kids today?" The answers, alas, are predictable and unilluminating. With Steve Zahn, as a whacked-out dervish of free-floating manic energy, and Josh Hamilton, Wendy Hoopes, and Martha Plimpton. Directed by Robert Falls. (Mitzi E. Newhouse, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.)

That's Life!—A seriocomic revue about the variety of Jewish life in America. The songs deal with a girl trying to find her place in a patriarchal tradition, a woman embracing the born-to-shop stereotype, a father teaching his three-year-old son a Yiddish song, etc. Thirteen composers and lyricists collaborated on the twenty musical numbers. The choreography and direction are by Helen Butleroff. (Playhouse 91, at 316 E. 91st St. 831-2000.)

Three Tall Women—A moving, poetic play by Edward Albee, which is dominated by the huge, heroic performance of Myra Carter. Jordan Baker and the droll and delightful Marian Seldes are also in the cast. Directed by Lawrence Sacharow. (5/16/94) (Promenade, Broadway at 76th St. 239-6200.)

The Tide Is High—Before they graduate from college and go their separate ways, five women from the Carbondale High class of '89 reunite on a stormy night in one of their old haunts—an attic plagued with faulty electricity and would-be poltergeists. As the lights flicker and the thunder cracks, the tough-talking women in B. Scharolais's play haul out the Ouija board and try to dispel childhood ghosts, but mostly they drink beer and talk about dreamy guys. George Cron directed this Love Creek production. (Nat Horne, 440 W. 42nd St. 769-7973.)

LONG RUNS

Angels in America: "Millennium Approaches" and "Perestroika." (Walter Kerr, 219 W. 48th St. 239-6200.) . . . **Blood Brothers:** Music Box, 239 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **Blue Man Group/Tubes:** Astor Place Theatre, 434 Lafayette St. 254-4370. . . . **Cats:** Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 239-6200. . . . **Crazy for You:** Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **Family Secrets:** Westside Theatre, 407 W. 43rd St. 307-4100. . . . **The Fantasticks:** Sullivan Street Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St., at Bleecker St. 674-3838. . . . **Guys and Dolls:** Martin Beck, 302 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **Kiss of the Spider Woman:** Broadhurst, 235 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **Laughter on the 23rd Floor:** Richard Rodgers, 226 W. 46th St. 307-4100. . . . **Les Misérables:** Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **Miss Saigon:** Broadway Theatre, Broadway at 53rd St. 239-6200. . . . **Nunsense:** Douglas Fairbanks, 432 W. 42nd St. 239-4321. . . . **Perfect Crime:** Duffy, 1553 Broadway, at 46th St. 695-3401. . . . **The Phantom of the Opera:** Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **Tony n' Tina's Wedding:** St. John's Church, 81 Christopher St. 279-4200. . . . **The Who's Tommy:** St. James, 246 W. 44th St. 239-6200.

IN ANOTHER CATEGORY—PERFORMANCE ART, ETC.

Serious Fun!—Final performances of this year's edition. July 27-30 at 8: Jo Harvey Allen stars in "Chippy: Diaries of a West Texas Hooker," a country-and-Western musical set in the Depression. Based on the actual diaries of a Texas woman, the show was written by Ms. Allen and Terry Allen and features music by Joe Ely, Butch Hancock, and the Allens, among others. (John Jay Theatre, 899 Tenth Ave., at 58th St.) . . . ¶ July 28 at 7:30: David Roussève/Reality. See Dance (below) for details. . . . July 29 at 7:30: Pomo Afro Homos. Satire and social commentary by three guys from San Francisco. (Alice Tully Hall. For information about tickets to all performances, call 875-5050.)

The Convention of Cartography—The Foundry Theatre presents a piece about an itinerant folk artist, with W. David Hancock. (Alley Cat Gallery, 112½ W. 17th St. 642-8141. July 27-31 at 8.)

Deluxe—"High-definition comedy" by Premium Bob, the performance-art duo formerly known as Bob & Bob. (HERE, 145 Sixth Ave., at Spring St. 647-0202. Fridays at 10:30. Through Aug. 12.)

DANCE

Facing the Music

Over the past ten years, the African-American choreographer David Roussève has developed into a modern-day raconteur, spinning text and movement from the stuff of personal experience. Roussève started out as a dancer and an actor, but he became frustrated performing the work of others. "I wanted to find my own voice and to speak about black culture," he says. "My work deals with difficult issues and fringe characters, because I want audience members to have compassion for those who are unlike themselves." Hope invariably surfaces in Roussève's work, and laughter routs despair.

In his dance-theatre pieces for Reality, his seven-member company, Roussève

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has tackled such loaded subjects as racism, violence, and homosexuality. The latest, "Pop Dreams," which will be performed on July 28, at Alice Tully Hall, as part of the "Serious Fun!" festival, flashes back over the life of a dying man, in a musical journey from Motown to rap. "I'm trying to make a positive statement about black men and their families," says Roussève. "I also wanted to look at death—which seems omnipresent in the age of AIDS—from an African perspective, which views life and death as a continuum."

Pilobolus Dance Theatre—Final performances of the engagement. July 27 at 8: "The Particle Zoo," "Alraune," "Vestidigitations," "Walklyndon," and "Debut C."... ¶ July 28 at 8 and July 30 at 2: "Untitled," "Pseudopodia," "Animundi," "Televisitation," and "Sweet Purgatory."... ¶ July 29 at 8: "The Particle Zoo," "Duet," "Quatrejeux," and "Rejoyce."... ¶ July 30 at 8: "Collideoscope," solo from "The Empty Suitor," "Shizen," and "Day Two." (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800.)

Pilar Rioja—The renowned flamenco dancer in an extended engagement. The program includes the New York premières of "Sixth Dance" and "Ritmos," plus two Andalusian folk songs, "Café de Chinitas" and "El Vito." (Repertorio Español, Gramercy Arts Theatre, 138 E. 27th St. 889-2850. July 27-29 at 8, July 30 at 3, and July 31 at 7. Through Aug. 21.)

David Roussève/Reality—In the "Serious Fun!" series. (Alice Tully Hall. 875-5050. July 28 at 7:30.)

Poongmul-Nori Company of New York—Presenting traditional Korean drumming, dance, and acrobatics. (Central Park Band Shell, mid-Park at 72nd St. July 30 at 5. No tickets necessary.)

OUT OF TOWN

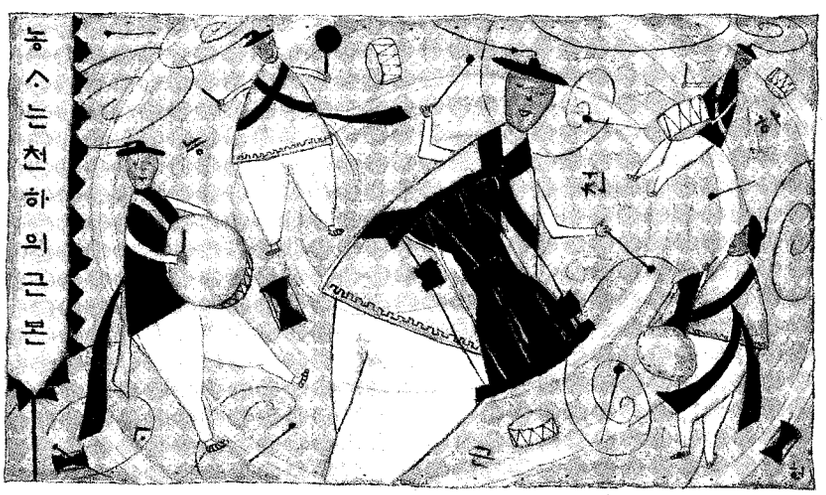
Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival—July 27-28 at 8, July 29 at 8:30, and July 30 at 2 and 8:30: Garth Fagan Dance, in a program that consists of "Draft of Shadows," "Time After Before Place," "Sojourn," and "Prelude."... ¶ July 28 at 7, July 29 at 8, July 30 at 5, and July 31 at 7: The Pat Graney Company teams up with an all-female ensemble, the Billy Tipton Memorial Saxophone Quartet, in "Sax House," an evening-length piece.... ¶ Aug. 2 at 8: Bill T. Jones / Arnie Zane Dance Company, in "The Gift / No God Logic," "Achilles Loved Patroclus," "Just You," and "Absence." Through Aug. 6. (Becket, Mass. 1-413 243-0745. The season continues through Sept. 4.)

NIGHT LIFE

The Sage

Tommy Flanagan, at sixty-four, now presides over all of jazz piano. (On the podium with him, of course, are Barry Harris and Dave McKenna, both also sixty-four; John Lewis, seventy-four; and the father of them all, Hank Jones, seventy-six.) Flanagan, who is back at Tavern on the Green (through August 7), is short, bald-pated, and bespectacled, and he likes to laugh and be merry in a sotto-voce way. Of a poetic cast, he unreels endlessly supple melodic lines, paying them out at whatever speed their tempos demand. He likes to spread the melody out in chords in the first chorus, then compress the song into brand-new single-note improvisations that contain sudden ascending arpeggios, seven- or eight-note runs that he breaks off and repeats an octave lower, beautiful little countermelodies, and patches of mock double time. At the end, he returns briefly to the original melody, which immediately tells us how far he has travelled.

Flanagan sometimes lets several years go by between recordings, but he recently put out two CDs, both done in 1993. "Let's" (Enja) was made in Denmark and includes eleven Thad Jones tunes. A lot of them have a jumpy, bebop feel, which has the curious effect of making Flanagan sound like Bud Powell here and there. The second CD, "Lady Be Good . . . For Ella" (Verve), has two superb reworkings of "Oh, Lady, Be Good!," one slow and rocking and the other a brilliant fast mimicking of Ella's famous scat recording. Flanagan likes to tell the story of Fitzgerald's reaction to his playing when he joined her as an accompanist in the mid-sixties: "If it's going to be like this, I'm getting out of the business," she said. It wasn't, and she didn't.



YUMI HEO

Poongmul-Nori Company of New York at the Central Park Band Shell.

CONCERTS

Counting Crows—Lead singer Adam Duritz occasionally sounds like an eerie clone of Van Morrison and sometimes seems to have acquired the petulant ego that most pop stars take years to develop, but there's no getting around the fact that his band's début album, "August and Everything After," is a brilliant collection of soulful, melodic rock. They're opening for the Stones later this summer, and they deserve the honor. With Soul Rebels Brass Band and Lori Carson. (Beacon Theatre, Broadway at 74th St. 496-7070. July 27-28 at 7:30.)

"Jazz in July"—The Y's annual series comes to a close. July 27: "All in the Family." Sandy Stewart, Bill and Tom Charlap, George Triffon, and Ron Vincent; Jay, Carolyn, Donna, and Michael Leonhart; Walt and Ken Levinsky; and Dick and Judy Hyman, Butch Miles, and Jeff Claus.... ¶ July 28: "Soprano Summit / Summit Reunion." In the wrong hands the soprano saxophone can be a deadly instrument, but Kenny Davern and Bob Wilber turn it into a thing of beauty. A reunion of these telepathic teammates—who are also superb clarinettists—is always an event. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 996-1100. Concerts at 8.)

Spin Doctors—This loose, entertaining, three-chord rock band has a new album of hook-laden tunes that sounds a lot like their last triple-platinum album of hook-laden tunes. It's a winning formula, and they play it with ease. Opening for them are the Gin Blossoms, a great pop band, the magnificent Cracker, and Vinx. (Jones Beach Theatre. 1-516 221-1000. July 29-30 at 7:30.)

Janet Jackson—With M.C. Lyte. (Radio City Music Hall, Sixth Ave. at 50th St. 247-4777. July 27 at 8.)

Jackson Browne—With John Hiatt. (Jones Beach Theatre. July 28 at 8.)

Elton John / Billy Joel—Giants Stadium, the Meadowlands. 1-201 935-3900. July 28-29 at 8.

John Lurie and the Lounge Lizards—With the Black Rock Coalition Orchestra (including Kelvyn Bell, Vernon Reid, and Bernie Worrell), who will pay tribute to the late Sonny Sharrock. (Central Park SummerStage, Rumsey Playfield, mid-Park at 72nd St. July 30 at 3. No tickets necessary.)

Richard Marx—Radio City Music Hall, Sixth Ave. at 50th St. 247-4777. July 30 at 8.

Manu DiBango—With B.T. Express. (Central Park SummerStage. July 31 at 3. No tickets necessary.)

The Barbeque Band—A group featuring Hamiet Bluiett and Donald Harrison launches the Brooklyn Museum's annual jazz series, which focusses this year on the "Soul Connection." (Sculpture Garden, Brooklyn Museum. 1-718 638-5000. July 31 at 3.)

JAZZ AND STANDARDS

Ballroom, 253 W. 28th St. (244-3005)—**Mercedes Hall** is here on July 27. For a week beginning July 28, actor and jazz pianist **Michael Moriarty**, late of TV's "Law and Order" and Broadway's "My Fair Lady," brings in his "Jazz Cabaret '94" revue—a revised version of his acclaimed 1990 show.

Birdland, 2745 Broadway, at 105th St. (749-2228)—The **Tex Allen** quintet plays on July 29-30. Sunday evenings belong to **Pete (La Roca) Sims.** Dining.

Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (475-8592)—Through July 31: **Flora Purim & Airto**, featuring **José Neto**, and the **Gato Barbieri** quartet. Singer **Angela Bofill** begins an engagement on Aug. 2. Dining.

Bradley's, 70 University Pl., at 11th St. (228-6440)—Through July 30: **Stephen Scott, Clarence Penn**, and **Michael Bowie.** Scott's approach to the piano is unique; his phrasing and rhythms seem accountable only to his whims. His dashing style has all the I'll-try-if-I-want-to bravado of his mentor, singer Betty Carter. Dining.

Carlyle Hotel, Madison Ave. at 76th St. (744-1600)—In Bemelmans Bar, don't miss the excellent **Kurt Wieting.**

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NIGHT LIFE—Cont'd

Fat Tuesday's, 190 Third Ave., at 17th St. (533-7900)—The **sonny fortune** quartet continues through July 31. Starting Aug. 2: the **claudio roditi** quintet. On Mondays, guitarist-inventor **les paul** leads a trio. Dining.

Fez, 380 Lafayette St. (533-7000)—The **mingus big band** packs them in every Thursday. Dining.

Iridium, 44 W. 63rd St. (582-2121)—**kevin hays** is here through July 30. The **lafayette harris** trio begins on Aug. 2.

Knickerbocker, 33 University Pl., at 9th St. (228-8490)—Pianist **bill mays** appears through July 30, joined by bassist **ray drummond** for the last two evenings. Mays is Mr. Taste, a cultivated mainstreamer who has yet to play an inelegant phrase; Drummond's broad tone and daring interjections provide the spice. Maybe someday their two recordings as a duo will be acknowledged as the classics they are.

Knitting Factory, 47 E. Houston St., near Mulberry St. (219-3055)—July 27-28: **prima materia,** with **rashied ali,** presents an evening of Coltrane music. July 29: Guitar guru **marc ribot** and **shrek,** along with **anthony coleman's self-haters orchestra.** Aug. 1: **tim berne's blood count.**

Le Madeleine, 403 W. 43rd St. (246-2993)—Every Sunday evening, guitar great **gene bertoncini** lights up this cozy Hell's Kitchen bistro with his simmering melodicism and chordal grace.

Michael's Pub, 211 E. 55th St. (758-2272)—On Mondays, Woody Allen continues his night job as clarinet player in the **new orleans funeral and ragtime orchestra,** a Dixieland-jazz ensemble. The rest of the week **vernel bagneris** continues his salute to Jelly Roll Morton. Closed Sundays.

Metropolis, 31 Union Square W. (675-2300)—On July 29-30: the **cecil mc bee** quintet. A bassist extraordinaire, McBee can probably crack walnuts between his knuckles. He's an intensely powerful instrumentalist, who brings passion and intelligence to music that wends its way between the avant-garde and the contemporary mainstream—an easy feat when your c.v. includes gigs with everyone from Dinah Washington to Chico Freeman. Monday nights, catch **contribution,** a reggae-tinged jazz collective.

Red Blazer Too, 349 W. 46th St. (262-3112)—Thursdays belong to Stan Rubin's big band and Phoebe Légère; Fridays to Lew Anderson's big band and the Kit McClure sextet; and Saturdays to Bob Cantwell and his Stompers.

Sweet Basil, 88 Seventh Ave. S., at Bleecker St. (242-1785)—Trombonist **ray anderson** and the **alligatory band** are in through July 31. No matter how out of bounds Anderson gets, there's funk around the edges. On this R. & B.-scented project, which brings him together with the versatile drummer Lew Soloff, Anderson gets down and dirty, without the guilt. An electrified big band belonging to trumpeter **miles evans** is in action on Mondays. Dining.

Tavern on the Green, Central Park W. at 67th St. (873-3200)—The **tommy flanagan** trio is in all week.

Tatou, 151 E. 50th St. (753-1144)—July 26: "Louisiana style" fun with restaurant critic gone zydeco enthusiast **bryan miller.** The **nat jones** trio entertains every weekend. Dining.

Village Vanguard, 178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—The **marvin (smitty) smith** quintet performs through the end of July. There are bands led by drummers, and then there are drummers' bands, such as Smith's outfit. Every note is echoed and informed by the percussionist's controlling rhythms and comments. Smith is an urgent, loud, and proud player, and an adept composer; his team includes saxophonist Steve Wilson, pianist Geoff Keezer, bassist Kenny Davis, and vibraphonist Joe Locke. The **vanguard jazz orchestra** holds sway on Mondays.

Zinno, 126 W. 13th St. (924-5182)—Through July 30: **bob kindred, bill charlap,** and **david finck.**

ROCK, ETC.

Bottom Line, 15 W. 4th St., at Mercer St. (228-6300)—The **iguanas** and **tab benoit** drop in on Aug. 2.

Spin Doctors at Jones Beach Theatre.

Café Sin-é, 122 St. Marks Pl. (982-0370)—July 30: **she never blinks.** Lead singer Lydia Kavanagh, who worked with the Golden Palominos, has a clear, alert voice that can sound either rock solid or delicate. Some of the band's experimental and pleasantly eccentric folk music was compiled last year on their indie album, "Don't Step on Tiny."

CBGB & OMFUG, 315 Bowery, at Bleecker St. (982-4052)—July 29: Sample **red red meat.** The **grifters** swing over from Hoboken on July 30.... ¶ Next door, at CB's Gallery, catch local folkies **byron estep** and **daniel cartier** on July 29.

The Cooler, 416 W. 14th St. (229-0785)—Singer-songwriter **syd straw** brings her delightfully offbeat physical and vocal charms to the club on July 27.

Duplex, 61 Christopher St., at Seventh Ave. (255-5438)—The **lady bunny** continues her extended run.

Irving Plaza, 17 Irving Pl., at 15th St. (777-6800)—On July 28, catch the **dave matthews band. offspring** arrives on July 29, with **lunachicks.** The bill also includes Guttermouth and Big Drill Car.... ¶ The Swing Dance Society gathers here every Sunday night, at the Continental Club. The dancers all share a passion for the Lindy Hop, a dance that involves a lot of whirling and the occasional display of underwear. Sets from eight until midnight. For information on the society, call 696-9737.

Limelight, Sixth Ave. at 20th St. (807-7850)—**morbid angel** will try to wake the dead on July 31, with help from Crowbar. Wednesday night is Disco 2000.

Ludlow Street Café, 165 Ludlow St. (353-0536)—Mondays belong to **beat rodeo,** a straight-shooting bar band that plays a mixture of country, blues, Dylan, Byrds, Velvets, and various pop curiosities.

Manny's Car Wash, 1558 Third Ave., at 87th St. (369-2583)—On July 27, **milo z & z funk** serve up innocuous R. & B.

Maxwell's, 1039 Washington St., Hoboken. (1-201 798-4064)—**big drill car** rolls in on July 28, followed by the **grifters** on July 29. July 30: **cell.**

Mercury Lounge, 217 E. Houston St. (260-4700)—Singer-songwriter **jeffrey gaines** is here on July 27. Call Gaines an angry but sensitive young man: his brisk melodies and taut, driving arrangements recall singer-songwriters of the post-punk era, but his earnest lyrics are more evocative of James Taylor than Elvis Costello. With his newly released sophomore album, "Somewhat Slightly Dazed," Gaines rocks harder and shows more textural daring than he did on his 1992 début. Aug. 2: Alternative pop with **madder rose.**

New Music Café, 380 Canal St. (941-0900)—**bop apocalypse** appears on July 27.

Paddy Reilly's Music Bar, 519 Second Ave., at 29th St. (686-1210)—**black 47** usually plays on Wednesdays and Saturdays, and Speir Mor (Gaelic for Big Sky) performs for a hearty following on Fridays. Séisiún—a traditional Irish jam—is on Thursday nights.

Rainbow & Stars, 30 Rockefeller Plaza. (632-5000)—**cybill shepherd** continues through Aug. 6. The model turned actress turned L'Oréal spokeswoman has studied music since the sixties, her press release tells us, and she once performed with Stan Getz. Accompanying Shepherd for this engagement, which will feature rock and blues numbers as well as standards, are pianist Tom Adams, keyboardist Robert Martin, bassist Don Falzone, and drummer Jack J. LeCompte. Closed Mondays.

Sounds of Brazil, 204 Varick St., at W. Houston St. (243-4940)—Soul diva **dianne reeves** sings on July 27. On Aug. 2, South African jazz star **hugh masekela** and Malian vocalist **omou sangare** begin a three-night run. Closed Sundays. Dining.

Supper Club, 240 W. 47th St. (921-1940)—Thursday nights belong to **giant step,** a roving collective of musicians, rappers, and d.j.s who mix jazz, funk, and hip-hop. **Us3** appears on July 28, with spoken-word artist **reg e. gaines.**

Tramps, 51 W. 21st St. (727-7788)—**teena marie** stops by on July 29. A former protégée of Rick James, she scored an early-eighties hit with "Lovergirl," a juicy slice of blue-eyed funk. These days, her crossover dreams may have faded, but her big, brassy voice is still diva-worthy. Monday nights, Tramps hosts Soul Kitchen, an evening of seventies R. & B. for devotees of Don Cornelius.

Webster Hall, 125 E. 11th St. (353-1600)—A byzantine disco wonderland, with four floors, a coffee shop, and a wig boutique. Wednesday is drag night. Psychedelic Thursdays feature grunge acts and cheap beer.

J. C. SMITH

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ART

Go East

DURING the summer, the cozier elements of the New York art world decamp to the provinces. The Hamptons are especially favored in this regard, so it comes as no surprise to find a passel of worthy art shows there. The highlights: paintings and sculptures from the sixties through the eighties by longtime East Hampton resident Willem de Kooning, at the Guild Hall (through July 31); paintings by Matthew Weinstein and sculptures by Keith Sonnier at the recently opened Off Shore Gallery (beginning July 29); and a retrospective of paintings by Joan Snyder at the Parrish Art Museum (through August 21), in Southampton.

The Snyder exhibit, covering paintings from 1969 to the present, is particularly welcome, as it offers an opportunity to assess a significant but perhaps underappreciated artist. The trajectory of Snyder's career reverses in some respect the archetypal modernist progression from representation to abstraction. The earliest works in this show, like the vibrantly hued "Lines and Strokes" (1969) and "Summer Orange" (1970), clearly derive from Abstract Expressionist gestural painting and the cooler schemata of minimalism. As Snyder's art progresses, representational elements begin to sneak back in. The mature works are lush and thickly impastoed paintings, into which personal iconography, banished from serious painting by the advanced art of the sixties, has been readmitted.

MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St.—"Four Silk Kashan Rugs." Opens Aug. 2. . . . ¶ "Dali: The Early Years." It is fashionable to dismiss the Spanish Surrealist Salvador Dali (1904-89) as a purveyor of schlock, yet his brilliant, visionary early works are as original and influential as any produced by Surrealism. The nightmarish concupiscence of "William Tell and Gradiva" (1931) is not merely raunchy: it shocks, still. "The Persistence of Memory" (1931), with its famous melting watches, is one of this century's unforgettable images. The show also includes a video installation of scenes from "Un Chien Andalou," Dali's historic collaboration with Buñuel. . . . ¶ "Picasso and the Weeping Women: The Years of Marie-Thérèse Walter and Dora Maar." Some eighty paintings, drawings, sculptures, and ints. . . . ¶ The Annenberg collection of Impressionist and Post-Impressionist works, which includes paintings by Picasso and Renoir, has returned to the nineteenth-century European paintings and sculpture galleries. . . . ¶ "Petrus Christus: Renaissance Master of Bruges." Twenty-seven works by the Flemish painter—three-quarters of Petrus's known œuvre—in an exhibit reconstructing his career as an artist of the first rank. Through July 31. . . . ¶ "Waist Not," a Costume Institute exhibit, proposes the waist as the defining element of the fashion silhouette, offering examples from the eighteenth century to the present. Through Aug. 21. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:15, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

Museum of Modern Art, 11 W. 53rd St.—"Modern British Drawings: Selections from the Collection." The portraits in this summer exhibition of drawings speak most forcefully. Gaudier-Brzeska's charcoal of Wyndham Lewis creates, with a few vigorous, masculine strokes, a head as palpably real as the sculptor's marble. A pair of self-portraits, by Lewis and William Roberts, are remarkably similar in tone and self-presentation. Frank Auerbach's "Head of Catherine Lampert VI" is a ghostly apparition, the head suspended in an evanescent swirl of exquisite art marks. Gilbert and George offer a heavy-handed satire of the British sporting portrait in a triptych that features a pair of badly executed drawings of themselves in rural settings, flanking a textual lampoon of art-worshipping pomposity that reads "To Be With Art Is All We Ask." . . . ¶ "Masterpieces from the David and Peggy Rockefeller Collection: Manet to Picasso" includes Cézanne's "Still-Life with Fruit Dish" and Matisse's "Interior with Girl Reading." . . . ¶ Prints by Toulouse-Lautrec, Picasso, and Popova are part of "Master Prints from the Collection." Through Aug. 2. (Open Saturdays through Tuesdays, 11 to 6; Thursdays and Fridays, noon to 8:30.)

Guggenheim Museum, Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—"Oskar Kokoschka, Works on Paper: The Early Years, 1897-1917." This show of the German Expressionist's drawings and watercolors ranges from a sophisticated, conventional *Naturstudie* done at age eleven to a looser, wilder study for a lithograph, "Soldiers Fighting Each Other with Crucifixes" (1917). The exhibit's twenty-year span shows the artist trying on different styles and evolving into a full-blown Expressionist. Also included are color illustrations for a fairy tale Kokoschka wrote called "The Dreaming Boys." Through Aug. 24. . . . ¶ "The Tradition of the New: Post-War Masterpieces from the Guggenheim Collection" doesn't have the élan of a typical Guggenheim show, but taken as a crash course it's very satisfying. An amble up the ramp begins with Abstract Expressionism and brakes at minimalism. Detours out of the rotunda include a room devoted to Donald Judd (1928-94) and one to Joseph Beuys (1921-1986), both of whom are well represented in the permanent collection. (Open Sundays through Wednesdays, 10 to 6, and Fridays and Saturdays, 10 to 8.)

Guggenheim Museum SoHo, 575 Broadway—"Rolywholyover A Circus." John Cage (1912-92) took his title from Joyce's "Finnegans Wake" and used, among other things, a computerized version of the "I Ching" to create a circus. Cage said, "The basic idea is that the exhibition would change so much that if you came back a second time, you wouldn't recognize it." It includes a rotating exhibit of work by fifty artists, including Rauschenberg and Joseph Cornell; *enso* scrolls; an interactive computer installation; an object each from the permanent collections of several New York museums; and a media room with a program that is always changing. For schedule information, call 423-3836. Through Aug. 7. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 11 to 6, and Saturday evenings until 8.)

Armenian manuscripts at the Morgan Library.

Whitney Museum of American Art, Madison Ave. at 75th St.—A retrospective of more than two hundred paintings and works on paper by Joseph Stella (1877-1946), the American Futurist, who occupies a small but secure niche in the canon of twentieth-century American art. A celebrant of the brash energies of industrialism and technological innovation, he painted the Brooklyn Bridge repeatedly in the late teens and the twenties. Coming from an acolyte of modernity, it's often a surprisingly drab picture—cramped in composition and rife with sooty shadows. This show emphasizes the immigrant experience; Stella is the perpetual outsider, stranded between the traditions of the old country and the New World. (Open Wednesdays, and Fridays through Sundays, 11 to 6; Thursdays, 1 to 8.)

American Museum of Natural History, Central Park W. at 79th St.—"Royal Tombs of Sipán." Gold, silver, and gilded copper objects of the Moche, a pre-Inca civilization of northern Peru. (Open daily, 10 to 5:45, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

Brooklyn Museum, Eastern Parkway—"Louise Bourgeois: The Locus of Memory, Works 1982-1993." An expanded version of the sculptor's 1993 Venice Biennale exhibit, with some twenty-five works made from Carrara marble, rubber, wood, bronze, steel, and glass. There are also thirty works on paper. Bourgeois's haunted and often intensely theatrical sculptural investigations of memory, dread, and desire have become key works in the current artistic climate. Through July 31. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 10 to 5.)

Alternative Museum, 594 Broadway—"Life Crisis," an installation by Carl Tandatnick. Through Aug. 6. . . . ¶ Third Annual National Showcase Exhibition. Through Aug. 6. (Open Tuesdays through Saturdays, 11 to 6.)

American Craft Museum, 40 W. 53rd St.—"Bauhaus Workshops: 1919-33." Furniture, metalwork, glass, textiles, and ceramics made by disciples of the German school of architecture and design, including Mies van der Rohe, Josef Albers, and Marianne Brandt. (Open Tuesdays, 10 to 8; Wednesdays through Sundays, 10 to 5.)

Arsenal Gallery, Central Park, Fifth Ave. at 64th St.—"Islands and Bridges: The Past, Present, and Future of Randall's and Wards Islands." Island-hop without leaving home. This exhibit consists mostly of black-and-white photographs of such events as Duke Ellington playing at Downing Stadium, in a 1938 tribute to George Gershwin, and track meets. A shot of several dozen people walking across the Triboro Bridge in 1936 illustrates the need for public access to the islands. There are also architectural renderings of proposed alterations to the islands, the most beautiful being a pristine sepia-toned drawing of Wards Island and Hell Gate, which depicts baseball fields in place of the hospital. Through Aug. 4. (Open Mondays through Fridays, 9 to 4:30.)

Asia Society, Park Ave. at 70th St.—A thirty-eight-inch bronze Buddha from Thailand is the centerpiece of an exhibit of some fifty related sculptures—of Maitreyas, Buddhas, and bodhisattvas—which share certain postures and stylistic conventions. Closer inspection reveals the differences between the Khmer, Mon, and Shrivijayan types. Through

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ART—Cont'd

July 31. (Open Tuesdays through Saturdays, 11 to 6, and Thursday evenings until 8; Sundays, noon to 5.)

Bard Graduate Center, 18 W. 86th St.—"Cast Iron from Central Europe, 1800-50." During the Napoleonic wars, Prussian women were encouraged to exchange their gold jewelry for iron products to help finance the war; this patriotic effort was one of the reasons for that half century's imaginative use of iron in everything from garden furniture to earrings. Details of production, seen here in lithographs, a scale-model blast furnace, wooden molds, and a roughcast of jewelry, are sprinkled throughout this charming show, which contains more than two hundred decorative cast-iron objects. Through Aug. 7. (Tuesdays through Sundays, 11 to 5, and Thursday evenings until 8:30.)

Bronx Museum of the Arts, 1040 Grand Concourse—"Xu Bing: Recent Work." . . . ¶ "Building the Collection: Recent Acquisitions and Selected Works from the Permanent Collection." (Open Wednesdays through Fridays, 10 to 5; Saturdays and Sundays, 1 to 6.)

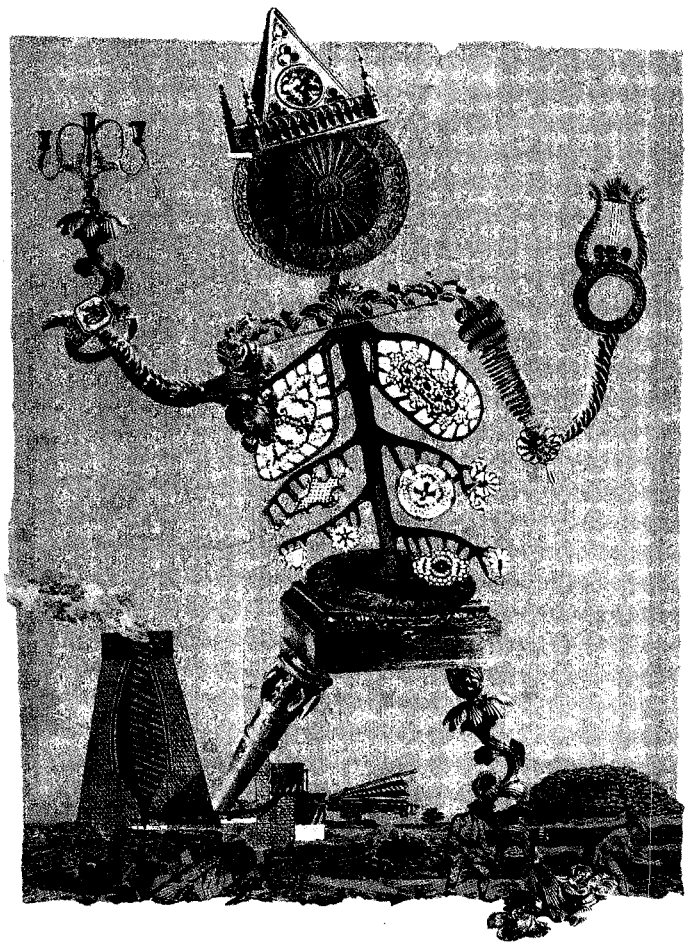
Cooper-Hewitt Museum, Fifth Ave. at 91st St.—"Packaging the New: Design and the American Consumer 1925-75." A trip down short-term-memory lane, documenting the rise of industrial designers, who became indispensable to the quenching of America's thirst for new products. The pink Formica kitchen display looks like a perky old magazine advertisement come to life. The docents should look like Stepford wives. Through Aug. 14. (Open Tuesdays, 10 to 9, with no admission charge after 5; Wednesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 5; Sundays, noon to 5.)

Jewish Museum, Fifth Ave. at 92nd St.—"The Art of Memory: Holocaust Memorials in History" chiefly uses documentary material—architectural models, designs, photographs, and video—to trace the development of these memorials in Europe, Israel, and the United States. Ultimately, this show proposes the memorial as a place for remembering rather than as a repository for memories. Through July 31. (Open Mondays, Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Sundays, 11 to 5:45; Tuesdays, 11 to 8.)

Morgan Library, 29 E. 36th St.—"Treasures in Heaven: Armenian Illuminated Manuscripts" focusses on the Gospel as the central cultural artifact of the Armenian people. Enormous pains were taken to illustrate the manuscripts and protect them from marauders; it was thought that therein lay salvation for book owner and maker. The approximately ninety manuscripts on display offer a variety of illustrative techniques, from the folksy to the ornate, executed in remarkably vibrant mineral-based colors. Several pages from "The Gladzor Gospel" (completed in 1307) have been framed to allow visitors to see more than one spread at a time. There's also a tenth-century Gospel, items dating from the Armenian diaspora of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and a display devoted to binding and pigment production. Through Aug. 7. (Open Tuesdays through Fridays, 10:30 to 5; Saturdays, 10:30 to 6; Sundays, noon to 6.)

Museum of American Folk Art, Columbus Ave. at 65th St.—"New York Beauties: Quilts from the Empire State." Twenty-two of the approximately six thousand quilts obtained through the museum's New York Quilt Project are on view. (Open daily, except Mondays, 11:30 to 7:30.)

Museum of the City of New York, Fifth Ave. at 104th St.—"Beals' Bohemians: Photographs by Jessie Tarbox Beals." Greenwich Village during the early nineteen-hundreds, as captured by America's first woman photojournalist. . . . ¶ "Pride=Power!" marks the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Stonewall rebellion, in which patrons of a gay bar resisted arrest and harassment, triggering a series of riots and demonstrations. The exhibit includes photographs of the New York City Gay and Lesbian Pride March, posters, pennants, T-shirts, and other artifacts. (Open Wednesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 5; Sundays, 1 to 5.)



"Cast Iron from Central Europe, 1800-50," at the Bard Graduate Center.

National Academy of Design, Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—Thirty-two Old Master drawings, by, among others, Claude Lorrain and Giovanni Domenico Tiepolo. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, noon to 5; Friday evenings until 8, with no admission charge after 5.)

New Museum, 583 Broadway—"Huang Yong Ping: Chinese Hand Laundry and Chen Zhen: Field of Waste." Two installations for which the artists have divided the gallery into both shared space and individual territory, positioning their work according to the principles of Chinese chess. Through Aug. 7. (Open Wednesdays through Fridays, and Sundays, noon to 6; Saturdays, noon to 8.)

New York Public Library, Fifth Ave. at 42nd St.—"Becoming Visible: The Legacy of Stonewall." Photos, posters, and related material place the Stonewall rebellion in the larger context of gay history. . . . ¶ "German Literary Landmarks: From the Enlightenment to the Romantic Era" documents the rise of modern German literature (from the mid-eighteenth to the mid-nineteenth century), with first editions of works by Goethe, Schiller, and Kleist. Children's books from the same period are also on display. Through Aug. 6. (Mondays, Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays, 10 to 6; Tuesdays and Wednesdays, 11 to 6.)

New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, Lincoln Center—"Revealing Roots: Uncovering Influences on the Contemporary American Puppet Theatre." Six stunning exhibits show how the puppetry traditions of Japan, Indonesia, Mexico, and Western Africa, among other places, have infused American puppet artistry with their mythos and technique. (Open Mondays and Thursdays, noon to 8; Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Fridays, and Saturdays, noon to 6.)

Socrates Sculpture Park, Broadway at Vernon Blvd., Long Island City—"Bongo Park '94" includes work by Gunilla Bardolin, Mark di Suvero, and Nancy Rubins. (Open daily, 10 to sunset.)

Studio Museum in Harlem, 144 W. 125th St.—Minimalist bronze sculptures by Helen Evans Ramsaran. (Open Wednesdays through Fridays, 10 to 5; Saturdays and Sundays, 1 to 6.)

GALLERIES—UPTOWN

(Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Mondays through Fridays from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6.)

Ann Agee / Julie Trager—Elegantly painted porcelain sex toys, by an artist whose work was featured in the "Bad Girls" show at the New Museum. / Coarsely textured fibre sculptures. Through Aug. 6. (Yoshii, 20 W. 57th St.)

Willem de Kooning—Paintings, drawings, and sculptures representing phases in the career of the renowned Abstract Expressionist, from the late forties to the mid-eighties. There is one delicate yet large painting from the artist's last productive period, several drawings that show de Kooning at his very best, and some sculptures, like the ugly, lumpy "Clam Digger" from 1972, which demonstrate that even geniuses have bad days. Through Aug. 12. (C & M, 45 E. 78th St.)

Dorel Dobocan—Paintings, watercolors, and drawings by a Romanian artist. Through Aug. 26. (Sander, 19 E. 76th St.)

Roberto Juarez—"Postcards," small paintings of oranges. Through Aug. 26. (Robert Miller, 41 E. 57th St.)

Jacob Kainen—Forty abstract paintings, from 1934 to 1992. Through Oct. 1. (Equitable, Seventh Ave. at 51st St. Opens Saturdays at noon.)

Donald Lipski—An array of small wall-mounted sculptures (circa 1978-91) composed of such everyday objects as razor blades, scissors, rubber bands, and cigarettes. A mood of slightly tiresome whimsy prevails. Through July 29. (Galerie Lelong, 20 W. 57th St.)

Steven Miller—Abstract paintings with references to the human form. Through Aug. 5. (Landon, 1926 Broadway, at 65th St.)

Georges Noël—Abstractions with distressed surfaces, done in the sixties, by a French painter. Through Sept. 9. (Zabriskie, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St.)

Anniversary—A centennial show in tribute to Otto Kallir (1894-1978), who founded the gallery. Included are paintings, drawings, and prints by Oskar Kokoschka, Morris Hirshfield, and Emil Nolde. Through Sept. 2. (Galerie St. Etienne, 24 W. 57th St.)

"Graphic Design in Revolutionary Russia"—An exhibition of photographs, drawings, and posters by Gustav Klucis, Alexander Rodchenko, and others. Through Aug. 26. (Schickler, 52 E. 76th St.)

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"Heads and Torsos"—Drawings by Georg Baselitz, Eugène Leroy, Markus Lüpertz, A. R. Penck, and Don Van Vliet. Through Sept. 10. (Werner, 21 E. 67th St.)

"Rebels with a Cause: The American Modernists"—More than sixty paintings, works on paper, and sculptures by, among others, John Marin, Oscar Bluemner, and Joseph Stella. Through Sept. 2. (York, 21 E. 65th St.)

"White Works"—Eighteen painters and sculptors, among them Alexander Calder, John Chamberlain, and Dan Flavin, examine the notion of white. Through Sept. 9. (Pace, 32 E. 57th St.)

"Who Needs a Bathing Suit Anyway?"—A group show featuring work by Milton Avery, Paul Cadmus, and Jared French. It explores nudity in American art. Through Aug. 17. (Midtown Payson, 745 Fifth Ave., at 57th St.)

GALLERIES—DOWNTOWN

Group Show Roundup—Summer is the season of the group show, when galleries would just as soon close their doors but are obliged to remain open and put something on the walls. Exhibitions fall into two overlapping categories: theme shows (often specious), and shows of gallery artists. Occasionally, one encounters something that merits a detour. At **anderson**, 476 Broome St.: "A Floor in a Building in Brooklyn," curated by painter Chuck Close, features the work of eight young artists who live and work in a commercial loft space in Greenpoint. As a theme show, it benefits from the straightforward simplicity of its premise. Through July 30. . . . ¶ At **brooke alexander**, 59 Wooster St.: "Drawn in the 1970s" is a terrific show of works on paper by eccentric and archetypal artists of the era. Don't miss Richard Tuttle's delicate paper constructions, Bruce Conner's Rorschachs, and Allen Ruppersberg's Borgesian drawing of a wall of books, "One Title from America and Twelve Hundred from Elsewhere Including: Tongatopu . . ." Through Aug. 12. (Closed Mondays.) . . . ¶ At **gladstone**, 99 Greene St.: Work by gallery artists, the standouts being an important 1980 triptych by Richard Prince and three photo-and-text pieces from 1969 by Vito Acconci. Through July 29. . . . ¶ At **metro pictures**, 150 Greene St.: Works by gallery artists at this temple of neo-conceptual, often photo-based art include lurid scatological drawings by Mike Kelley, father figure of "pathetic" art, and Tony Oursler's weird video installation, in which a woman's face, contorted in orgasmic expressions, is projected onto the head of a cloth doll. Through Aug. 26.

Rita Ackermann / "The Fall Collection"—Paintings of naughty nymphets, all of them dead ringers for this Hungarian-born artist, executed in a linear, cursive style. The girls—they can only be called girls—wear expressions of either bored anomie or bland contentment as they engage in a variety of illicit activities. / In the back room, "The Fall Collection," a set of albums and singles documenting the career of the Fall, the archetypal art-punk band from Britain. Check out lead vocalist Mark E. Smith's ins-and-outs list. In: sliced white bread with additives, Asian pop groups, Irish whiskey. Out: brown bread with bits in it, all Dutch groups, Chablis wine. Through Aug. 12. (Rosen, 130 Prince St.)

Jef Bourgeau—One of the latest to fall under the thrall of Marcel Duchamp is Jef Bourgeau, a Michigan artist. In his first New York show Bourgeau combines homey antique objects with tiny video monitors that make absurdist commentaries on the vicissitudes of life. "Paradise Lost" is a glass wall box filled with potpourri and a two-inch video of a hand reaching out for a bouquet of flowers that is continually snatched away. Grossest is a doll's house with a peekaboo video that depicts a reënactment of John Wayne Bobbitt's misfortune. These pieces are clever and well made, but too literal-minded, giving us a chuckle and a "Got it!" where Duchamp left us pondering a mystery. Through Aug. 26. (LedisFlam, 130 Prince St.)

Judith Wolf—This Los Angeles-based artist has used the Hebrew alphabet as the inspiration for a series of large visionary canvases, intended to reflect mystical processes of spiritual change and renewal. The best one is "My Center," in which she has transformed the zayin into a stone weapon surrounded by arrows. Others, like "A Sign for Good," in which the teth is the basis for a vessel filled with glowing crystals, are merely vapid. Through Aug. 5. (DNC, 101 Wooster St. Open Saturdays, noon to 5.)

Michael Heizer—Stone sculptures hang from massive steel cables, and rough-hewn boulders have been set into the walls and floor. Through Aug. 15. (Ace, 275 Hudson St., at Spring St. Tuesdays through Saturdays, 1 to 6.)

Kim Hyung-Dae—"Halo," a series of abstract paintings. Through Aug. 6. (Wimmer, 560 Broadway. Closed Mondays; open Saturdays.)

Henry Moore (1898-1986)—An exhibition that features "Reclining Connected Forms," one of Moore's last monumental sculptures. Through Sept. 10. (Gagosian, 136 Wooster St.)

Mary T. Smith—Figurative paintings by a ninety-year-old Mississippi artist. (Ricco/Maresca, 152 Wooster St.)

"Sanctuary"—Five artists working in a variety of mediums. Through Aug. 26. (Tz'Art, 28 Wooster St. Closed Mondays.)

PHOTOGRAPHY

Art Kane—Forty years of pictures by a photographer best known for his landscape and fashion work. Through Aug. 12. (Staley-Wise, 560 Broadway.)

William Eggleston—A mini-retrospective titled "From Graceland to Wasteland," presenting Eggleston's colorful, often lurid vision of the South. Through Aug. 12. (Laurence Miller, 138 Spring St.)

W. Eugene Smith—Images by a photographer best known for his photo-essays in *Life*. Through Aug. 19. (Mann, 42 E. 76th St.)

"Appeal to This Age: Photography of the Civil Rights Movement, 1954-1968"—Work by forty-three photographers, including Robert Frank and Richard Avedon. Through July 30. (Greenberg, 120 Wooster St.)

"Flowers"—A group show featuring work by William Abranowicz, Walker Evans, Graciela Iturbide, and others. Through Aug. 5. (Witkin, 415 West Broadway.)

"1969: Context & Event"—Photographs of the Woodstock festival, juxtaposed with photographs from the same period taken by Diane Arbus, Lee Friedlander, and Garry Winogrand. Through Aug. 30. (Pace MacGill, 32 E. 57th St.)

"Peace, Love and Rock 'n' Roll (The Sixties)"—More from the Summer of Love: a group show featuring work by Charles Gatewood, Shelly Rusten, and Burk Uzzle. Through July 30. (292 Gallery, 120 Wooster St.)

"Photography in Germany (1913-35)"—A group show featuring work by Albert Renger-Patzsch, Werner Matz, and others. Through Aug. 26. (Schickler, 53 E. 76th St.)

International Center of Photography, 1130 Fifth Ave., at 94th St.—"Paradise Outlaws: Fifty Years of the Beat Generation." Photographs by Mellon Tytell. . . . ¶ "Henri Cartier-Bresson: Hommage." (Open daily, except Mondays, 11 to 6, and Tuesday evenings until 8.)

International Center of Photography Midtown, Sixth Ave. at 43rd St.—German-born photographer Lotte Jacobi's portraits of artists and intellectuals, including a wonderful shot of Albert Einstein in a leather jacket (1938) and a closeup of J. D. Salinger (1950). (Open daily, except Mondays, 11 to 6, and Tuesday evenings until 8.)

(See the museum listings for photography exhibitions at the Arsenal Gallery, the Museum of the City of New York, and the New York Public Library.)

CLASSICAL MUSIC

Reality Check

Van Cliburn had hypercelebrity thrust upon him when, in 1958, he scored a symbolic Cold War victory by winning Moscow's First Tchaikovsky International Piano Competition. His iconic status has held firm ever since, scarcely disrupted by a decade-long concert sabbatical during which popular curiosity about his reclusiveness and eccentricity threatened to overshadow memories of his exceptional gifts as a musician. He retired from retirement in 1987, but just barely; he gave only seven public performances in the next seven years, and some of those mixed brilliance with tentativeness.

Three weeks ago, Cliburn celebrated his sixtieth birthday by launching what has the look of a national comeback tour. Everything seemed crafted to recall earlier times, from the accompanying Moscow Philharmonic (the current incarnation of the orchestra with which he triumphed in Moscow) to the repertoire, which originally included the two warhorse concertos he has been most closely identified with—Tchaikovsky's First and Rachmaninoff's Third. Even Copland's "A Lincoln Portrait," which Cliburn narrates, was a safe bet to recall the patriotic lump that rose in many an American throat in 1958.

Such a strenuous program suggested that Cliburn hoped to make up for his absence in one fell swoop. But had he overestimated his own prodigious abilities? When the tour opened, in Los Angeles, the Copland and the Tchaikovsky went according to plan (or vaguely so, according to most critics), but at the last minute Cliburn scratched the Rachmaninoff, offering several solo recital tidbits as restitution. After the same thing happened in Dallas, and then in St. Louis, Cliburn decided that Rachmaninoff's Third would not be on this summer's menu after all. So it's official: when the tour reaches the Metropolitan Opera House, on August 2, Cliburn will recite the Copland, focus his energy on the Tchaikovsky, and limit dessert to a few chestnuts.

OPERA

New York Grand Opera—Presenting Verdi's "I Lombardi," with soprano Cynthia Springsteen, tenors Gerard Powers and Joseph de Leon, and bass Valentin Peytchinov. Fully staged, with Vincent La Selva conducting. (Central Park SummerStage, Rumsey Playfield, mid-Park at 72nd St. July 27 at 7:30. No tickets necessary.)

ORCHESTRAS

New York Philharmonic—Kurt Masur conducts Beethoven's "Creatures of Prometheus" Overture, Triple Concerto (with the Beaux Arts Trio), and Symphony No. 7. (Carnegie Hall. 247-7800. July 27-28 at 8.) . . . ¶ Zdenek Macal conducts Howard

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CLASSICAL MUSIC—Cont'd

Hanson's Symphony No. 2 and Dvořák's Symphony No. 8. (Great Lawn, Central Park. Aug. 1 at 8, with fireworks following. No tickets necessary. . . . ¶ Great Kills Park, Staten Island. Aug. 2 at 8. No tickets necessary. Rain date, Aug. 9.)

Mostly Mozart—At Avery Fisher Hall. July 27: Armin Jordan conducts the Mostly Mozart Festival Orchestra in Mozart's Serenade for Thirteen Winds (the "Gran Partita," K. 361) and Piano Concerto in B-Flat Major (K. 456, with Ursula Oppens), as well as Haydn's Symphony No. 79. . . . **NOTE:** Pianist Harris Goldsmith will offer an all-Mozart pre-concert recital, beginning at 7 and open to ticket holders. . . . ¶ July 28: Gerard Schwarz conducts the Mostly Mozart Festival Orchestra in three Mozart piano concertos, each with a different soloist: the Concerto in F Major (K. 459, with Hélène Grimaud), in E-Flat Major (K. 449, with Cecile Licad), and in D Major (K. 451, with Robert Levin). . . . ¶ July 29-30: Armin Jordan conducts the Mostly Mozart Festival Orchestra in Haydn's Symphony No. 80 and D-Major Cello Concerto (featuring Ralph Kirshbaum), as well as Mozart's G-Major Piano Concerto (K. 453, with Menahem Pressler). . . . **NOTE:** In a pre-concert recital beginning at 7 and open to ticket holders, pianist Norman Krieger will play sonatas by Clementi and Mozart. . . . ¶ Aug. 1: Adam Fischer conducts the Austro-Hungarian Haydn Orchestra in Haydn's Overture to "La Fedeltà Premiata" and Symphony No. 97, Beethoven's Piano Concerto No. 2 (with Martha Argerich), and Schubert's A-Major Rondo for Violin and Orchestra (with Rainer Honeck). . . . **NOTE:** In a pre-concert recital beginning at 7 and open to ticket holders, Mr. Honeck and pianist Cordelia Höfer will perform a Schubert duo and arrangements by Kreisler of Viennese standards. . . . ¶ Aug. 2-3: Mark Elder conducts the Mostly Mozart Festival Orchestra in Rossini's "La Scala di Seta" Overture and Mozart's Symphony No. 38 (the "Prague"); Itzhak Perlman is the soloist in Viotti's Violin Concerto No. 22 and Mozart's E-Major Adagio (K. 261) and C-Major Rondo (K. 373). (Evenings at 8. 875-5030.)

Naumberg Orchestra—Lukas Foss conducts his own "Salomon Rossi Suite," Vivaldi's A-Minor Two-Violin Concerto (Op. 3, No. 8, featuring father-and-son violinists Robert and Nicholas Mann), Stravinsky's "Pulcinella" Suite, de Falla's "El Amor Brujo" Suite, and two of Brahms' Hungarian Dances. (Damrosch Park, Lincoln Center. July 30 at 8. No tickets necessary.)

Moscow Philharmonic—Van Cliburn will narrate Copland's "A Lincoln Portrait" and will be featured in Tchaikovsky's Piano Concerto No. 1, as well as in short solo-piano works. Vassily Sinaisky conducts. (Metropolitan Opera House. 362-6000. Aug. 2 at 8.)

RECITALS

Juilliard Freebies—Student ensembles from the Juilliard School seem to be saturating the Big Apple with free hour-long concerts. July 27 at 12:30: The Cardinal Brass Quintet. (Bryant Park, Sixth Ave. at 42nd St.) . . . ¶ *July 28 at 6:30*: The Hudson Brass Quintet. (Dante Park, 63rd St. at the intersection of Broadway and Columbus Ave.) . . . ¶ Aug. 1 at 7: The Serenata Ensemble. (Bennett Park, 184th St. and Fort Washington Ave.) . . . ¶ Aug. 2 at 12:30: The Ethos Percussion Ensemble. (Continental Insurance Atrium, 180 Maiden Lane.) . . . ¶ Aug. 2 at 12:30: The Ventrissimo Woodwind Quintet. (Stuyvesant Park, Second Ave. at 15th St.)

Bargemusic—Pianist Hae Sun Paik performs Haydn's F-Minor Variations; violinists Nai-Yuan Hu and Scott Yoo, violist Ik-Hwan Bae, and cellist Fred Sherry join her for piano quintets by Shostakovich and Brahms. (Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. 1-718 624-4061. July 28 at 7:30 and July 31 at 4.)

Summergarden 1994—The Museum of Modern Art's summer survey of early-twentieth-century musical styles continues with works for large chamber ensembles (or small chamber orchestras, depending on how you look at it): Carlos Chávez's "Energia," Hindemith's Kammermusik No. 3 (featuring cellist David Eggar), Varèse's "Octandre," and Satie's "Socrate" (in an English version, with soprano Renée Santer and mezzo-soprano Nan Hughes). Joel Sachs conducts. (Sculpture Garden, Museum of Modern Art, 14 W. 54th St. July 29-30 at 8:30. No tickets necessary.)

City Island Baroque Ensemble—Violinist Hanaberit Hahnemann is featured in two concertos by Vivaldi. (Le Refuge Inn, 620 City Island Ave., City Island, the Bronx. July 31 at 11:30 A.M. Admission is free, but call 1-718 885-2478 to reserve a seat.)

Bronx Arts Ensemble Brass Quintet—Playing free concerts of show tunes. (July 31 at 2. Rockwood Drive Circle, Van Cortlandt Park, the Bronx. . . . At 4: McGinley Center, Fordham University, Bronx Rose Hill Campus. For information or directions, call 1-718 601-7399.)

Chin Kim and Ilan Rechtman—The violinist and the pianist perform sonatas by Beethoven (his Sixth, in A Major) and Debussy. (Hotel Wales, Madison Ave. at 92nd St. July 31 at 6 and 8. Admission is free, but call 876-6000 to reserve a seat.)

OUT OF TOWN

Rutgers SummerFest—Concluding concerts of the season. July 27: The festival's annual keyboard extravaganza limits itself this year to the modern grand piano, heard alone or in pairs. The program includes solo works by Beethoven, Liszt, Scriabin, Rachmaninoff, and Satie (his "Sports et Divertissements"), and two-piano compositions by Rachmaninoff, Milhaud, and Lutoslawski (his "Variations on a Theme by Paganini.") . . . ¶ July 28: Music from Aston Magna presents period-instrument performances of works by Brahms, the two Schumanns, Albert Dietrich, and Joseph Joachim. . . . ¶ July 29: Chamber music by Schubert, including his Octet. . . . ¶ July 30: Yehuda Gilad conducts the Festival Orchestra in Beethoven's Symphony No. 3, Schumann's Piano Concerto (with Robert Taub), and Stravinsky's Two Suites for Small Orchestra. (Nicholas Music Center, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, N.J. Evenings at 8. For information about tickets, call 1-908 932-7511.)

Tanglewood—July 27 at 8:30: Richard Goode performs Beethoven's Piano Sonatas in E-Flat Major (Op. 27, No. 1), D Minor (Op. 31, No. 2), F Major (Op. 10, No. 2), and A-Flat Major (Op. 110). . . . ¶ July 28 at 8:30: Singer Ute Lemper, with pianist Bruno Fontaine. . . . ¶ July 29 at 8:30: Christian Thielemann conducts the Boston Symphony in Beethoven's "Egmont" Overture, Piano Concerto No. 1 (with Maria Tipo), and Symphony No. 7. . . . ¶ July 30 at 8:30: Mr. Thielemann conducts the Boston Symphony in Wagner's "Tannhäuser" Overture, Schumann's Symphony No. 4, and orchestrations (by Brahms, Reger, Liszt, Webern, and Felix Mottl) of Schubert songs (sung by baritone Hermann Prey). . . . ¶ July 31 at 2:30: Seiji Ozawa conducts the Boston Symphony in Mendelssohn's Overture to "A Midsummer Night's Dream," Henze's Symphony No. 8, and Beethoven's Violin Concerto (with Midori). . . . ¶ Aug. 2 at 8:30: Mr. Ozawa, Leon Fleisher, and John Williams conduct the Boston Symphony and the Tanglewood Music Center Orchestra in a wide-ranging program that includes Tchaikovsky's "1812 Overture." (Lenox, Mass. For information about tickets, call 1-413 637-1600.)

Caramoor Music Festival—July 28 at 4:15: The St. Luke's Chamber Ensemble plays a flute quartet by C. P. E. Bach, Mozart's C-Major String Quintet (K. 515), and (with pianist David Oei) Mendelssohn's D-Major Sextet. . . . ¶ July 29 at 8:30: Julius Rudel conducts the St. Luke's Chamber Ensemble in a program of *Harmoniemusik:* selections from operas—in this case, Mozart's—arranged for wind band by the composer's contemporaries in eighteenth-century Vienna. . . . ¶ July 30 at 8:30: Mr. Rudel conducts the Orchestra of St. Luke's in a suite from Handel's "Water Music," Haydn's Symphony No. 27, and Beethoven's Overture and Incidental Music to "Egmont" (with actor Edward Gero narrating); soprano Benita Valente is featured in arias by Handel and Haydn. . . . ¶ July 31 at 5:30: Richard Goode performs Beethoven's Piano Sonatas in E-Flat Major (Op. 27, No. 1), F Minor (Op. 57, the "Appassionata"), F Major (Op. 10, No. 2), and E Major (Op. 109). (Katonah, N.Y. 1-914 232-1252.)

Glimmerglass Opera—Strauss's "Ariadne auf Naxos," with sopranos Sheila Smith and Valerie Gonzalez, mezzo-soprano Charlotte Hellekant, and tenor Tim Tobin; directed by Mark Lamos and conducted by Stewart Robinson. (July 28 at 8 and Aug. 1 at 2.) . . . ¶ Gilbert and Sullivan's "Iolanthe." (July 29 at 8.) . . . ¶ Monteverdi's "L'Incoronazione di Poppea," with soprano Dana Hanchard and countertenors David Daniels and Brian Asawa; directed by Jonathan Miller, and with Jane Glover conducting a period-instrument ensemble. (July 30 at 8.) . . . ¶ Rossini's "Il Barbiere di Siviglia," with soprano Theodora Hanslowe, tenor Paul Austin Kelly, and baritone Philip Cokorinos; Stewart Robinson. (July 31 at 2.) (Cooperstown, N.Y. For information about tickets, call 1-607 547-2255.)

Aston Magna Festival—Period-instrument performances of works by Brahms (his Horn Trio), the two Schumanns, Albert Dietrich, and Joseph Joachim. (Bard College, Annandale-on-Hudson, N.Y. July 29 at 8. For information about tickets, call 1-914 758-6822. . . . ¶ St. James Church, Great Barrington, Mass. July 30 at 6. For information about tickets, call 1-413 528-3509.)

Norfolk Chamber Music Festival—July 29 at 8:30: Aldo Parisot conducts the Norfolk Chamber Orchestra in Bach's D-Minor Concerto for Three Pianos (featuring Peter Frankl, Joan Panetti, and Elizabeth Sawyer Parisot) and orchestral arrangements of string quartets by Haydn and Schubert (his "Death and the Maiden," as transcribed by Mahler). . . . ¶ July 30 at 8:30: The Fine Arts String Quartet plays Haydn's Quartet in E-Flat Major (Op. 64, No. 6), Mendelssohn's Quartet in E-Flat Major (Op. 12), and Dohnányi's C-Minor Piano Quintet (with Peter Frankl). . . . ¶ July 31 at 3: Jonathan Babbitt directs the Litchfield County Choral Union in Verdi's Requiem. (Route 44, Norfolk, Conn. 1-203 542-3000.)

FRANÇOISE ROUSSET

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Music Mountain—The Leontovych String Quartet plays Haydn's D-Major Quartet (Op. 76, No. 5), Barber's Quartet, and Shostakovich's Piano Quintet (with Svyatoslav Levin assisting). (Falls Village, Conn. July 31 at 3. For information about tickets, call 1-203 824-7126.)

Maverick Concerts—The Miami String Quartet plays quartets by Beethoven (in A Minor, Op. 132), Robert Starer, and Schubert (his First). (Woodstock, N.Y. 1-914 679-8217. July 31 at 3.)

ABOVE AND BEYOND

China Green—As part of their Gardens Around the World series, which pairs a plant tour with a cultural event, on July 31 at 1 the Brooklyn Botanic Garden turns its attention to China and its trees. At 2:30, the Chinese Music Ensemble of New York will perform. (1000 Washington Ave., near Grand Army Plaza. No tickets necessary.)

Sweet Puck—The 1993-94 season was a thriller for hockey fans. All three local teams made it to the playoffs, with the Rangers, of course, taking home the shiny cup. At Street Hockey at the Seaport, fans will have a chance to take to the asphalt in pickup games, watch exhibition matches, measure their slap-shot speed, and shake hands with local hockey stars. (Water St., between Fulton and Wall Sts. July 30, from noon to 4. No tickets necessary.)

Going Mobile—Conceived in 1964 by Billy Taylor, the Jazzmobile was originally meant to be driven through neighborhoods whose residents couldn't afford to pay to hear top names in jazz. Now it parks itself like a classy ice-cream truck and issues sounds of summer far more appealing than the endless loop of "Pop Goes the Weasel." In Manhattan, it pulls up in front of Grant's Tomb on Wednesdays, from 7 to 9, throughout July and August. On July 27, Two Franks (saxophonists Frank Foster and Frank Wess) will be the jazz passengers. While the tunes are dispensed, visitors can take in a bazaar of African-influenced crafts, food, and clothing. (Riverside Drive at 122nd St. No tickets necessary. Through Aug. 31.)

Stroke!—The Finlandia Clean Water Challenge, a four-week benefit race for twenty-five solo canoeists and kayakers, began on June 29 in Chicago, and before it ends in New York, on July 29, participants will have dipped their oars in Lake Michigan, the Erie Canal, and eight rivers, among other waterways. In the final leg of the thousand-mile journey, the paddlers will leave from Weehawken at 10:30 and are expected at the World Financial Center (North Cove Yacht Harbor) around noon. Local boaters can race along the same stretch, beginning at 10. For more information, call the American Canoe Association at 1-703 451-0141.

Tattoo You—The Tattoo Society of New York will host a tattoo contest, on Aug. 1, from 7 to 10. Awards will be given for best black-and-white, most historic, and best back, among others. Michael Wilson, the Coney Island Illustrated Man, will receive guests at the door. Matty Jankowsky, the curator of Body Archive, which houses books, photos, and other related tattoo material, will warm up the audience with a talk. (CBGB's 313 Gallery, 313 Bowery, at 1st St. For more information, call 477-1363.)

Readings & Talks—July 27 at 7:30: Kim Tropea and Lizette Ramos will talk about bats of the Northeast. (Wave Hill, Independence Ave. at 249 St., the Bronx. 1-718 549-3200.) . . . ¶ July 28 at 8:30: Walter Mosley, whose most recent book in the Easy Rawlins detective series is "Black Betty," and Gloria Naylor, author of "The Women of Brewster Place," will read from their own fiction. (Central Park SummerStage, Rumsey Playfield, mid-Park at 72nd St. No tickets necessary.) . . . ¶ Aug. 1 at 8: Readings by John Giorno, Ann Rower, Darius James, and John Wynne, from "High Risk 2: Writings on Sex, Death, and Subversion," a new anthology edited by Amy Scholder and Ira Silverberg. (A Different Light, 151 W. 19th St. No tickets necessary.)

Walks & Tours—July 27 at 8: Calling all night owls. The 92nd Street Y is offering a moonlight walk in Central Park. For more information, call 996-1100. . . . ¶ July 30 at 1: Radical Walking Tours will check in to the the Chelsea Hotel area for a tour. For more information, call 1-718 492-0069. . . . ¶ July 30 at 1: The Municipal Art Society will present "Forgotten Neighborhoods: Hoboken." For more information, call 935-3960. . . . ¶ July 31 at 10: The Brooklyn Historical Society will offer a tour of Coney Island, with tidbits about theme parks of yesteryear—Luna Park, Steeplechase, and Dreamland. For more information, call 1-718 624-0890. . . . ¶ July 31 at 2: Big Onion Walking Tours will stroll through historic Harlem. For more information, call 439-1090.

FOR KIDS

(A list of activities for children and their parents or other adults.)

Show Biz—Theatreworks/USA is offering free performances of "The Great Brain," a new musical with an old theme: the meaning of friendship. Recommended ages: six and older. (Promenade Theatre, Broadway at 76th St. Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays at 11 and 1; Wednesdays and Saturdays at 11. Through Aug. 6. Tickets available on a first-come, first-served basis, starting at 10 on the day of the performance.)

Rain or Shine?—Stand in front of a weather map and make your own forecast, using the video wizardry in the media center at the Children's Museum of Manhattan. Recommended ages: six and older. (212 W. 83rd St. 721-1234. July 30 at 12:30 and 2:30.)

Splash—A number of city pools are offering a three-week session of swimming lessons for beginners aged three to fourteen. Classes, which run from Aug. 2 through Aug. 22, are held weekdays from 9 A.M. to noon. Sign up—on a first-come, first-served basis—on Aug. 1, between 9:15 A.M. and 10:30 A.M., at the following Manhattan locations: John Jay Pool, 77th St. east of York Ave.; Hamilton Fish Pool, E. Houston and Pitt Sts.; Thomas Jefferson Pool, First Ave. at 111th St.; Carmine Street Pool, Seventh Ave. S. at Clarkson St.; and Highbridge Pool, Amsterdam Ave. at 173rd St. For additional information, call 1-718 699-4219.

SPORTS

(The Yankees play at Yankee Stadium, 1-718 293-6000, and the Mets at Shea Stadium, 1-718 507-8499.)

BASEBALL

Yankees—Vs. the Boston Red Sox, July 27 at 7:05 and July 28 at 1:05. . . . ¶ Vs. the Cleveland Indians, July 29 at 7:05 and July 30-31 at 1:35.

Mets—Vs. the Atlanta Braves, Aug. 1-2 at 7:40.

SOFTBALL

Celebrity Ball—Swing those hockey sticks. Looking to avenge last year's 7–2 loss in the annual celebrity softball game, Donald Trump has corked the roster of his New York All-Stars with several local pucksters, including Devils goalie Chris Terreri and Derek King of the Islanders. The Hollywood All-Stars will feature Dennis Haysbert ("Major League II"), Ron Silver, and various soap stars. The grudge match will be played on July 30 at noon, at Yankee Stadium, before the Cleveland Indians game.

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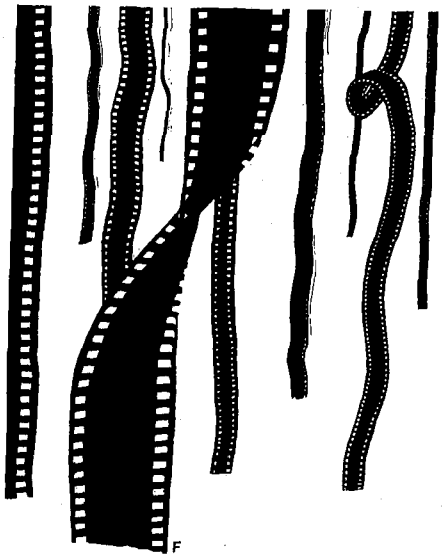

THE MOVIES

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
31	1	2	27	28	29	30

FILMS ACCOMPANIED BY A DAGGER ARE DESCRIBED IN "MOVIES IN BRIEF," STARTING ON PAGE 20.

BARONET AND CORONET, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (355-1663)
Theatre 1: "Forrest Gump" (†).
Theatre 2: "Forrest Gump" (†).

CINEMA I, CINEMA II, AND CINEMA 3RD AVENUE, 3rd Ave. at 60th. (753-6022)
Theatre 1: "I Love Trouble" (†).
Theatre 2: "The Wedding Gift" (Richard Loncraine), with Julie Walters.
Theatre 3: "Angels in the Outfield" (†).

FIRST & 62ND CINEMAS, 400 E. 62nd. (752-4600)
Theatre 1: "The Shadow" (†).
Theatre 2: "Speed" (†).
Theatre 3: "Speed" (†).
Theatre 4: "North" (Rob Reiner), with Elijah Wood.
Theatre 5: "Blown Away" (†).
Theatre 6: "Blown Away" (†).

GEMINI 1 AND 2, 2nd Ave. at 64th. (832-1670)
Theatre 1: Through July 28: "Maverick" (Richard Donner), with Mel Gibson. From July 29: "Black Beauty" (Caroline Thompson).
Theatre 2: Through July 28: "Renaissance Man" (Penny Marshall). From July 29: "It Could Happen to You" (†).

BEEKMAN, 2nd Ave. at 66th. (737-2622)
"Wolf" (†).

NEW YORK TWIN, 2nd Ave. at 67th. (744-7339)
Theatre 1: "The Client" (†).
Theatre 2: "The Client" (†).

68TH ST. PLAYHOUSE, 3rd Ave. at 68th. (734-0302)
"Ciao, Professore!" (Lina Wertmüller, in Italian).

TOWER EAST, 3rd Ave. at 71st. (879-1313)
July 27: "Four Weddings and a Funeral" (Mike Newell), with Hugh Grant and Andie MacDowell.
July 28: Theatre closed.
From July 29: "The Mask" (Chuck Russell).

EAST 85TH STREET, 1st Ave. at 85th. (249-5100)
"Lassie" (Daniel Petrie).

PARK & 86TH STREET CINEMAS, 125 E. 86th. (534-1880)
Theatre 1: "True Lies" (†).
Theatre 2: "True Lies" (†).

ORPHEUM VII, 3rd Ave. at 86th. (876-2400)
Theatre 1: Through July 28: "North" (Rob Reiner). From July 29: "The Mask" (Chuck Russell).
Theatre 2: "Forrest Gump" (†).
Theatre 3: "I Love Trouble" (†).
Theatre 4: Through July 28: "Forrest Gump" (†). From July 29: "It Could Happen to You" (†).
Theatre 5: "Speed" (†).
Theatre 6: "The Client" (†).
Theatre 7: Through July 28: "The Shadow" (†) and "Blown Away" (†). From July 29: "Black Beauty" (Caroline Thompson).

86TH STREET EAST TWIN, 3rd Ave. at 86th. (249-1144)
Theatre 1: "Angels in the Outfield" (†).
Theatre 2: "The Lion King" (†).

EAST SIDE

ANGELIKA FILM CENTER, 18 W. Houston St. (995-2000)
Theatre 1: "White" (†).
Theatre 2: "Go Fish" (directed by Rose Troche).
Theatre 3: "Mi Vida Loca" ("My Crazy Life"; Allison Anders).
Theatre 4: Through July 28: "My Life's in Turnaround" (Eric Schaeffer and Donal Lardner Ward). From July 29: "Barcelona" (Whit Stillman).
Theatre 5: "Spanking the Monkey" (David O. Russell).
Theatre 6: "Little Buddha" (†).

LITTLE THEATRE, Public Theatre, 425 Lafayette St. (598-7171)
"Passione d'Amore" (1981, Ettore Scola; in Italian).

MOVIELAND 8TH STREET TRIPLEX, 36 E. 8th. (477-6600)
Theatre 1: "True Lies" (†).
Theatre 2: "The Client" (†).
Theatre 3: "True Lies" (†).

VILLAGE THEATRE VII, 3rd Ave. at 11th. (982-0400)
Theatre 1: "Widows' Peak" (†).
Theatre 2: "Angels in the Outfield" (†).
Theatre 3: "Wolf" (†).
Theatre 4: "Forrest Gump" (†).
Theatre 5: Through July 28: "Forrest Gump" (†). From July 29: "It Could Happen to You" (†).
Theatre 6: Through July 28: "North" (Rob Reiner), with Elijah Wood. From July 29: "Black Beauty" (Caroline Thompson).
Theatre 7: "Forrest Gump" (†).

CINEMA VILLAGE, 22 E. 12th. (924-3363)
Through July 28: "Easy Rider" (1969, Dennis Hopper), with Peter Fonda, Hopper, and Jack Nicholson.
From July 29: To be announced.

VILLAGE EAST CINEMAS, 2nd Ave. at 12th. (529-6799)
Theatre 1: Through July 28: "Belle Époque" (Fernando Trueba, in Spanish) and "Kika" (Pedro Almodóvar, in Spanish). From July 29: "The Mask" (Chuck Russell).
Theatre 2: "I Love Trouble" (†).
Theatre 3: Through July 28: "Reservoir Dogs" (Quentin Tarantino). From July 29: "Foreign Student" (Eva Sereny).
Theatre 4: "The Wedding Gift" (Richard Loncraine), with Julie Walters.
Theatre 5: "The Lion King" (†).
Theatre 6: "Lassie" (Daniel Petrie).
Theatre 7: "Sankofa" (Haile Gerima).

19TH STREET EAST 6, B'way at 19th. (260-8000)
Theatre 1: "The Client" (†).
Theatre 2: Through July 28: "The Lion King" (†). From July 29: "It Could Happen to You" (†).
Theatre 3: "The Lion King" (†).
Theatre 4: Through July 28: "The Client" (†). From July 29: "The Mask" (Chuck Russell).
Theatre 5: "Wolf" (†).
Theatre 6: "Angels in the Outfield" (†).

MURRAY HILL CINEMAS, 160 E. 34th. (689-6548)
Theatre 1: "The Client" (†).
Theatre 2: "Speed" (†).
Theatre 3: "The Lion King" (†).
Theatre 4: Through July 28: "Angels in the Outfield" (†). From July 29: "The Mask" (Chuck Russell).

34TH STREET SHOWPLACE, 238 E. 34th. (532-5544)
Theatre 1: "Forrest Gump" (†).
Theatre 2: "Blown Away" (†).
Theatre 3: "True Lies" (†).

34TH ST. EAST, 241 E. 34th. (683-0255)
"Lassie" (Daniel Petrie).

EASTSIDE PLAYHOUSE, 3rd Ave. at 55th. (755-3020)
Through July 28: "My Life's in Turnaround" (Eric Schaeffer and Donal Lardner Ward).
From July 29: "Barcelona" (Whit Stillman).

SUTTON 1 AND 2, 3rd Ave. at 57th. (759-1411)
Theatre 1: "The Lion King" (†).
Theatre 2: "Lassie" (Daniel Petrie).

GOTHAM CINEMA, 3rd Ave. at 58th. (759-2262)
"True Lies" (†).

PLAZA, 42 E. 58th. (355-3320)
"Spanking the Monkey" (David O. Russell), with Jeremy Davies and Alberta Watson.

MANHATTAN TWIN, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (935-6420)
Theatre 1: "The Flintstones" (Brian Levant), with John Goodman.
Theatre 2: "Baby's Day Out" (Patrick Read Johnson).

59TH STREET EAST CINEMA, 239 E. 59th. (759-4630)
"When a Man Loves a Woman" (Luis Mandoki), with Andy Garcia and Meg Ryan.

WEST SIDE

FILM FORUM, 209 W. Houston St. (727-8110)
Theatre 1: "Latcho Drom" (directed by Tony Gatlif, in Romany).
Theatre 2: See listings under Revival Houses.
Theatre 3: "The Boys of St. Vincent" (†).

WAVERLY 1 AND 2, 6th Ave. at 3rd. (929-8037)
Theatre 1: "Speed" (†).
Theatre 2: "Speed" (†).

ART GREENWICH TWIN, Greenwich Ave. at 12th. (929-3350)
Theatre 1: "Blown Away" (†).
Theatre 2: "The Shadow" (†).

QUAD CINEMA, 34 W. 13th. (255-8800)
Theatre 1: "Ciao, Professore!" (Lina Wertmüller, in Italian).
Theatre 2: Through July 28: "Coming Out Under Fire" (Arthur Dong), a documentary. From July 29: To be announced.
Theatre 3: "Just Like a Woman" (Christopher Monger).
Theatre 4: "The Conjugal Bed" (Mircea Daneliuc, in Romanian) and "L.627" (Bertrand Tavernier; in French).

CHELSEA CINEMAS, 260 W. 23rd. (691-4744)
Theatre 1: "True Lies" (†).
Theatre 2: Through July 28: "Forrest Gump" (†). From July 29: "Black Beauty" (Caroline Thompson).
Theatre 3: "Forrest Gump" (†).
Theatre 4: "Blown Away" (†).
Theatre 5: "Speed" (†).
Theatre 6: "Forrest Gump" (†).
Theatre 7: "Speed" (†).
Theatre 8: "The Shadow" (†).
Theatre 9: "True Lies" (†).

23RD ST. WEST TRIPLEX, 333 W. 23rd. (989-0060)
Theatre 1: "I Love Trouble" (†).
Theatre 2: "North" (Rob Reiner), with Elijah Wood.
Theatre 3: "Lassie" (Daniel Petrie).

GUILD, 33 W. 50th. (757-2406)
"Angels in the Outfield" (†).

WORLDWIDE CINEMAS, 50th St. between 8th and 9th Aves. (246-1583)
Theatre 1: "Schindler's List" (Steven Spielberg), with Liam Neeson.
Theatre 2: "Reality Bites" (Ben Stiller).
Theatre 3: "Jurassic Park" (Steven Spielberg).
Theatre 4: "Serial Mom" (John Waters), with Kathleen Turner.
Theatre 5: "In the Name of the Father" (Jim Sheridan), with Daniel Day-Lewis.
Theatre 6: "The Cowboy Way" (Gregg Champion), with Woody Harrelson and Kiefer Sutherland.

ZIEGFELD, 141 W. 54th. (765-7600)
"True Lies" (†).

FESTIVAL, 6 W. 57th. (307-7856)
Through July 28: "Kika" (Pedro Almodóvar, in Spanish).
From July 29: "Foreign Student" (Eva Sereny).

57TH ST. PLAYHOUSE, 110 W. 57th. (581-7360)
"Little Buddha" (†).

CARNEGIE HALL CINEMAS, 7th Ave. between 56th and 57th. (265-2520)
Theatre 1: "Go Fish" (Rose Troche), with Guinevere Turner.
Theatre 2: Through July 28: "Like Water for Chocolate" (Alfonso Arau; a Mexican film, in Spanish). From July 29: "Barcelona" (Whit Stillman).

ANGELIKA 57, 225 W. 57th. (586-1900)
Through July 28: "Bhaji on the Beach" (Gurinder Chadha).
From July 29 (tentative): "Freedom on My Mind" (Connie Field and Marilyn Mulford).

PARIS, 4 W. 58th. (980-5656)
"Widows' Peak" (†).

CINEMA 3, 2 W. 59th. (752-5959)
"Just Like a Woman" (Christopher Monger).

COLUMBUS CIRCLE, B'way at 61st. (247-5070)
"Lassie" (Daniel Petrie).

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62ND & BROADWAY, 62 W. 62nd. (265-7466)
"North" (Rob Reiner), with Elijah Wood.
LINCOLN PLAZA CINEMAS, B'way at 63rd. (757-2280)
Theatre 1: "Little Buddha" (†).
Theatre 2: "White" (†).
Theatre 3: "Four Weddings and a Funeral" (Mike Newell), with Hugh Grant and Andie MacDowell.
Theatre 4: "A Place in the World" (Adolfo Aristarain, in Spanish).
Theatre 5: "Red Rock West" (†).
Theatre 6: "Belle Époque" (Fernando Trueba, in Spanish).
REGENCY, B'way at 67th. (724-3700)
"True Lies" (†).
84TH STREET SIXPLEX, B'way at 84th. (877-3600)
Theatre 1: Through July 28: "Blown Away" (†). From July 29: "It Could Happen to You" (†).
Theatre 2: Through July 28: "Wolf" (†). From July 29: "The Mask" (Chuck Russell).
Theatre 3: "Forrest Gump" (†).
Theatre 4: "The Lion King" (†).
Theatre 5: Through July 28: "Angels in the Outfield" (†). From July 29: "Black Beauty" (Caroline Thompson).
Theatre 6: "The Client" (†).
THALIA, B'way at 95th. (316-4962)
"Spanking the Monkey" (David O. Russell).
METRO CINEMA 1 AND 2, B'way at 99th. (222-1200)
Theatre 1: "The Shadow" (†).
Theatre 2: "Speed" (†).
OLYMPIA I AND II, B'way at 107th. (865-8128)
Theatre 1: "I Love Trouble" (†).
Theatre 2: "Mi Vida Loca" ("My Crazy Life"; Allison Anders).

TIMES SQUARE AREA

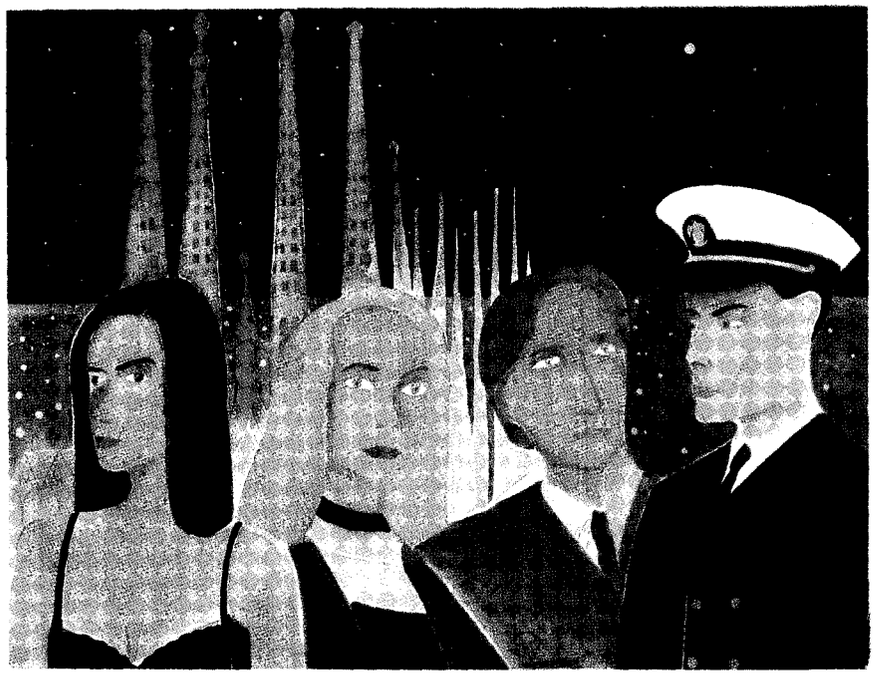
CRITERION CENTER, B'way at 44th. (354-0900)
Theatre 1: Through July 28: "The Flintstones" (directed by Brian Levant), with John Goodman. From July 29: "It Could Happen to You" (†).
Theatre 2: "The Client" (†).
Theatre 3: "Speed" (†).
Theatre 4: "Blown Away" (†).
Theatre 5: "Baby's Day Out" (Patrick Read Johnson).
Theatre 6: Through July 28: "Speed" (†). From July 29: "Black Beauty" (Caroline Thompson).
Theatre 7: Through July 28: "Blown Away" (†). From July 29: "The Mask" (Chuck Russell).
EMBASSY 1, B'way at 46th. (302-0494)
"The Lion King" (†).
EMBASSY 2, 3, AND 4, 7th Ave. at 47th. (730-7262)
Theatre 1: Through July 31: "Lassie" (Daniel Petrie). From Aug. 1: "Forrest Gump" (†).
Theatre 2: "North" (Rob Reiner).
Theatre 3: Through July 31: "Mi Vida Loca" ("My Crazy Life"; Allison Anders). From Aug. 1: "Lassie."
ASTOR PLAZA, 44th St. at B'way. (869-8340)
Through July 31: "Forrest Gump" (†).
From Aug. 1: To be announced.
NATIONAL TWIN, B'way at 44th. (869-0950)
Theatre 1: "Wolf" (†).
Theatre 2: "The Shadow" (†).

REVIVAL HOUSES

FILM FORUM 2, 209 W. Houston St. (727-8110)
"Jules and Jim" (1962, directed by François Truffaut; in French), with Jeanne Moreau, Oskar Werner, and Henri Serre. On Aug. 1, "The Black Bird" (1926, Tod Browning) and "Outside the Law" (1921, Browning), both with Lon Chaney.
THEATRE 80 ST. MARKS, 80 St. Marks Pl. (254-7400)
July 27: "Dark Victory" (1938, Edmund Goulding) and "Now, Voyager" (1942, Irving Rapper), both with Bette Davis.
July 28: "My Beautiful Laundrette" (1986, Stephen Frears) and "Local Hero" (1983, Bill Forsyth).
July 29-30: "How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying" (1967, David Swift) and "The Matchmaker" (1958, Joseph Anthony).
July 31: "Shane" (1953, George Stevens), with Alan Ladd; and "High Noon" (1952, Fred Zinnemann), with Gary Cooper.
From Aug.1: Theatre closed.

FILM LIBRARIES, ETC.

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9480)—A series of films from M-G-M studios. July 28 at 2:30 and July 30 at 5: "Border Incident" (1949, directed by Anthony Mann).... July 28 at 6 and July 30 at 1: "Devil's Doorway" (1950, Mann).... July 28 at 8 and July 30 at 3: "The Naked Spur" (†).... July 29 at 2:30 and July 31 at 5: "Bad Day at Black Rock" (†).... July 29 at 6 and July 31 at 1: "Mystery Street" (1950, John Sturges).... July 29 at 8 and July 31 at 3: "Kind Lady" (1951, Sturges).... Aug. 1 at 2:30: "The Beginning of the End" (1947, Norman Taurog).... Aug. 1 at 6: "Night Must Fall" (†).... Aug. 2 at 2:30: "The Big House" (1930, George Hill).... Aug. 2 at 6: "The Catered Affair" (1956, Richard Brooks).
WALTER READE THEATRE, Lincoln Center, 165 W. 65th St., plaza level. (875-5600)—A series of French films. July 27 at 2, 6, and 10: "Game of Love" (1954, Claude Autant-Lara).... July 27 at 4:05 and 8:05: "Eléna et les Hommes" (1956, Jean Renoir).... July 28 at 2, 6:10, and 10: "All Boys Are Called Patrick" (1957, Jean-Luc Godard), "Happy Anniversary" (1961, Pierre Étaix), and "Moving In" (1993, Chantal Akerman).... July 28 at 3:45 and 7:50: "White Paws" (1949, Jean Grémillon).... July 29 at 2 and 6:15 and July 30 at 6:15: "The Soft Skin" (1964, François Truffaut).... July 29-30 at 4:15 and 8:40: "Max Mon Amour" (1986, Nagisha Oshima).... July 30-31 at 2: "Donkey Skin" (1975, Jacques Demy).... July 31 at 4 and 8:30 and Aug. 1 at 4 and 8:40: "Mélo" (1988, Alain Resnais).... July 31-Aug. 1 at 6:15: "The Baker's Wife" (1938, Marcel Pagnol).
AMERICAN MUSEUM OF THE MOVING IMAGE, 35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria. (1-718 784-0077)—A program of films by Howard Hawks. July 30 at 2: "The Crowd Roars" (1932).... July 30 at 4: "Red Line 7000" (1965).... July 31 at 2: "Twentieth Century" (†).... July 31 at 4: "Barbary Coast" (1935).
ANTHOLOGY FILM ARCHIVES, 32 Second Ave., at 2nd St. (505-5181)—July 28 at 7: "A Bigger Splash: David Hockney" (Jack Hazan).... ¶ July 28 at 9: "Painters Painting: The New York Art Scene: 1940-70" (Emile de Antonio).... ¶ July 29-30 at 7: "Me and My Brother" (†); and "Last Supper" (1992, Robert Frank).... ¶ July 29 at 7:30, July 30 at 5, and July 31 at 7:30: "The Genius" (1993, Joe Gibbons).... ¶ July 29-30 at 9: A program of short films by Stan Brakhage.
METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St. (570-3949)—July 29 at 7: "Steel Magnolias" (1989, Herbert Ross).... ¶ July 30 at 4: "Cape Fear" (1991, Martin Scorsese), with Robert De Niro and Nick Nolte.... ¶ July 30 at 7: "Cape Fear" (1962, J. Lee Thompson), with Gregory Peck and Robert Mitchum.
BRYANT PARK, Sixth Ave. at 41st St.—Mondays, starting at dusk, free drive-in-style moviegoing, beginning with Looney Tunes cartoons and coming attractions. The feature film on Aug. 1 will be Alfred Hitchcock's "North by Northwest" (1959), with Cary Grant. (Rain date will be the following night.)
FILM AL FRESCO, at Le Madri Restaurant, 168 W. 18th St. (727-8022)—Sunday evenings, more films out of doors, with food and live music beginning at 6 and the main feature starting at about 9. On July 31, the feature will be Carlo Carlei's "Flight of the Innocent" (1993, in Italian), with Manuel Colao.
SYMPHONY SPACE, B'way at 95th St. (864-5400)—July 28 at 7:15: "Doña Herlinda and Her Son" (1986, Jaime Humberto Hermosillo; a Mexican film, in Spanish).... ¶ July 28-30 at 9 and July 31 at 8: "Two Half-Times in Hell" (1961, Zoltán Fábri; in Hungarian).... ¶ July 29 at 7:15: "Walkabout" (1971, Nicolas Roeg).... ¶ July 30 at 7:15: "Rashomon" (1951, Akira Kurosawa; in Japanese), with Toshiro Mifune.... ¶ July 31 at 5: "An Angel at My Table" (1991, Jane Campion).
FLORENCE GOULD HALL, 55 E. 59th St. (355-6160)—July 27 at 12:30, 3:15, 6, and 8:45: "Loin des Barbares" (1994, Liria Bejega; in French and Albanian), with Dominique Blanc.
A DIFFERENT LIGHT BOOKSTORE, 151 W. 19th St. (989-4850)—A Sunday-night series of free films (and popcorn). On July 31 at 7, Nancy Walker's "Can't Stop the Music" (1980), with the Village People, Valerie Perrine, and Bruce Jenner.
ASIAN AMERICAN INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL—The seventeenth annual festival will take place over this weekend (July 30-31), at Florence Gould Hall, 55 E. 59th St. (925-8685.)
ADAM CLAYTON POWELL, JR., STATE OFFICE BUILDING, 163 W. 125th St. (873-5040)—Aug. 1 at 6:30: "The Inkwell" (1994, Matty Rich), with Larenz Tate and Joe Morton; and "Joe's Bed-Stuy Barbershop: We Cut Heads" (1983, Spike Lee).... ¶ Aug. 2 at 6:50: "The Autobiography of Malcolm X" (1972, Marvin Worth); and "Death of a Prophet: The Last Days in the Life of Malcolm X" (1976, Woodie King, Jr.), with Morgan Freeman.



Mira Sorvino, Tushka Bergen, Taylor Nichols, and Chris Eigeman in "Barcelona."

COURTESY PARKER

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MOVIES IN BRIEF

FILMS OPENING THIS WEEK

Barcelona—Whit Stillman ("Metropolitan") wrote and directed this Cold War drama about love and intrigue among Americans living in post-Franco Spain. With Taylor Nichols, Chris Eigeman, Tushka Bergen, Mira Sorvino, Hellena Schmied, and Nuria Badia. Opening July 29.

Black Beauty—The adventures of a beautiful and noble horse in Victorian England. With Sean Bean and David Thewlis. Based on the 1877 novel by Anna Sewell. Written and directed by Caroline Thompson. Opening July 29.

Foreign Student—A French student (Marco Hofschneider) arrives in Virginia in 1956 and falls in love with a brilliant young black woman (Robin Givens) who works as a housekeeper. With Edward Herrmann, Rick Johnson, and Charlotte Ross. The script, by Menno Meyjes, is based on the novel by Philippe Labro. Directed by Eva Sereny. Opening July 29.

It Could Happen to You—Nicolas Cage stars in this romantic comedy about a New York City cop who gives an unusual tip to a down-on-her-luck waitress (Bridget Fonda): he promises to split the pot if his lottery ticket comes in a winner. With Rosie Perez. Written by Jane Anderson and directed by Andrew Bergman. (Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema.) Opening July 29.

The Mask—With the help of special effects, Jim Carrey is transformed from a nerdy bank clerk into a superhero with a thousand faces. With Cameron Diaz, Amy Yasbeck, and Peter Riegert. Written by Mike Werb. Directed by Chuck Russell. Opening July 29.

CURRENT FILMS

(The following notes are by Anthony Lane, Terrence Rafferty, and Michael Sragow. If a movie has been reviewed in The Current Cinema, the date of its review is given.)

Angels in the Outfield—Danny Glover plays a blustery baseball manager and Joseph Gordon-Levitt the boy-hero who humanizes him; Jay O. Sanders is the villain, a spiteful radio announcer who adopts the phrase "Less is more!" The moviemakers believe "more is more." With glops of heartbreak, slapstick, and uplift—and glitzy special effects—they overstuff the slender tale of how the boy's belief in the floundering California Angels draws the help of heavenly angels (led by Christopher Lloyd). In a big change from the 1951 version, the audience gets to see the seraphim that were previously visible only to the child (a girl in the first movie). The director, William Dear, doesn't leave anything to the imagination—his or anyone else's.—M.S. (Village Theatre VII, 19th Street East 6, Cinema 3rd Avenue, 86th Street East Twin, and Guild. . . . ¶ Murray Hill Cinemas, and 84th Street Sixplex; through July 28.)

Blown Away—As ludicrous as it is bombastic—a Boston-to-Cape Cod version of Scorsese's "Cape Fear" grafted onto an Irish-terrorist backdrop. Tommy Lee Jones outgargoyles De Niro as an explosives freak who escapes from a Northern Ireland prison and somehow makes it to Massachusetts, where he stages a homicidal grudge match against a former mate (Jeff Bridges) who went straight and is now an ace in Beantown's bomb squad. Stephen Hopkins, the director, exacerbates the chaotic silliness of the script by Joe Batteer and John Rice.—M.S. (34th Street Showplace, First & 62nd Cinemas, Art Greenwich Twin, Chelsea Cinemas, and Criterion Center. . . . ¶ Orpheum VII, and 84th Street Sixplex; through July 28.)

The Boys of St. Vincent—From the outside, St. Vincent—an orphanage, run by a Roman Catholic religious order, in St. John's, Newfoundland—is Boys Town; on the inside, it's a Dickensian hell, in which trapped boys burn for their elders' sins. The head Brother, Peter Lavin (Henry Czerny), is a monster, constantly forcing his sexual attentions on ten-year-old Kevin Reevey (Johnny Morina), and he's not the only abuser on the staff. John N. Smith's movie—a two-part film, made for Canadian television—is muckraking social drama that transforms itself, in the course of its three hours, into something far more disturbing than a straightforward exposé. Part I, set in 1975, is nearly as haunting an evocation of children's helplessness as "The Night of the Hunter." Part II, set fifteen years later, is about the helplessness of adults, and is even finer.—T.R. (6/6/94) (Film Forum.)

The Client—With Susan Sarandon, Tommy Lee Jones, and Brad Renfro; directed by Joel Schumacher. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Movieland 8th Street Triplex, 19th Street East 6, Murray Hill Cinemas, New York Twin, Orpheum VII, 84th Street Sixplex, and Criterion Center.)

Forrest Gump—Warm, wise, and wearisome as hell. Tom Hanks plays Forrest Gump, a simple Alabama soul who serves his country without hurting a fly; he saves his comrades in Vietnam, woos the dippy Jenny (Robin Wright), and runs back and forth across the continent. Hanks does his best to convince us that Gump is, in fact, a character, and not merely a bulging sack of virtues, but the movie takes the fight out of him. The director, Robert Zemeckis, is no slouch, as he proved in the "Back to the Future" trilogy, where he invented his own brand of smart, critical nostalgia. Here, however, the whole film is tuned up to Gump's pitch of gentle sweetness. The visual effects are neat enough, with Hanks showing up in old footage of Kennedy and L.B.J., but the movie just keeps on jogging, like its harmless hero, in no particular direction. With Sally Field as the hero's loving mother.—A.L. (7/25/94) (Village Theatre VII, 34th Street Showplace, Baronet, Coronet, Orpheum VII, Chelsea Cinemas, and 84th Street Sixplex. . . . ¶ Astor Plaza; through July 31. . . . ¶ Embassy; starting Aug. 1.)

I Love Trouble—This newspaper thriller cum romantic comedy, with Nick Nolte and Julia Roberts as rival reporters, fails to bring off the Tracy-Hepburn recipe of sexual tension and prickly repartee. It's like the worst possible Newman-Redford vehicle: the script reduces the stars to twinkling mannequins, and their chemistry barely rises to the buddy-buddy level. The big jokes—featuring zingers such as "Bitchville" and "little Dick"—would score only in a frat house.—M.S. (Village East Cinemas, Cinema I, Orpheum VII, 23rd St. West Triplex, and Olympia.)

It Could Happen to You—With Nicolas Cage, Bridget Fonda, and Rosie Perez; directed by Andrew Bergman. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Village Theatre VII, 19th Street East 6, Gemini, Orpheum VII, 84th Street Sixplex, and Criterion Center; starting July 29.)

The Lion King—Disney's new animated feature is a coming-of-age story about animal royalty. It's "Bambi," but with carnivores. The hero, a young lion named Simba, is born to the purple, but before he can ascend to the throne he has to make cute friends, court a soft-eyed female of the species, and see his father die (in a scene that may actually jerk kids' tears more shamelessly than its counterpart in "Bambi"). Between traumas, the movie serves up soothingly banal musical numbers (composed by Elton John and Tim Rice) and silly, rambunctious comedy. The animation, computer-assisted in some of the more elaborate sequences, is sometimes impressive, but rarely impressive enough to overcome a certain impersonality—a stubborn mechanical coldness. Among the celebrity voices on the soundtrack, two performances stand out: Jeremy Irons, as the villainous lion Scar, does an elegant, funny George Sanders impersonation, and Nathan Lane, reading the part of a peppy, skeptical meerkat, gives the picture a welcome shot of Warners-style brashness. Directed by Roger Allers and Rob Minkoff.—T.R. (6/20/94) (Village East Cinemas, 19th Street East 6, Murray Hill Cinemas, Sutton, 86th Street East Twin, 84th Street Sixplex, and Embassy 1.)

Little Buddha—How the director of "The Conformist," which looks better and sharper every year, ended up making "Little Buddha," which already looks out of date, is anybody's guess. In the late sixties, Bernardo Bertolucci might have got away with this kind of thing—this gentle, wondering, trippy slice of nonsense. Now it just makes you squirm. Bridget Fonda and Chris Isaak play the parents of a young boy who may be the reincarnation of a Tibetan lama. The film therefore splits between their home town of Seattle (gray and blue, glass and steel) and the mountain stronghold of the Buddhist monks (red and orange, silk and wood). This design pattern is the backbone of the picture; there really is nothing else to it. The only fun comes in the historical flashbacks to the story of Buddha, played by Keanu Reeves, stripped to the waist: the spiritual leader as supermodel.—A.L. (5/30/94) (Angelika Film Center, 57th St. Playhouse, and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

Red Rock West—This clever thriller about a good-hearted loner (Nicolas Cage) who trips and falls into a murder plot ranks tops among low-budget neo-noirs. Taut and deadpan witty, it makes spooky use of the setting—a small, windblown Western town—and its surprises actually add up: for once, an angular narrative serves to sharpen the characters. Dennis Hopper and J. T. Walsh do their freshest, snappiest work in years, and Lara Flynn Boyle is a tense, ambiguous love object. Cage's shaggy hangdog charm and core of intelligence and rectitude keep the audience rooting for the hero after several dumb moves. John Dahl's direction, like the script he wrote with his brother Rick, is sure and economical. Dwight Yoakam contributes a piquant cameo as a tough, helpful truck driver.—M.S. (Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

The Shadow—The adventures of Lamont Cranston (Alec Baldwin), a clandestine crime fighter with the power to "cloud men's minds" (in the memorable phrase from the "Shadow" radio series, which was popular in the thirties and forties). As pulp-recycling projects go, the movie—directed by Russell Mulcahy, from a script by David Koepp—isn't bad. The filmmakers don't camp up the material too much; the action cracks along at a steady, if not relentless, pace; and the thirties production design (by Joseph Nemec III) is swell. The disproportion between effort and effect makes the picture seem a little silly, though. In nearly two hours, and at a cost of over forty million dollars, the movie supplies almost exactly the entertainment value of a single half-hour episode of the original radio drama, which always sounded as if it cost about a buck ninety-eight to produce. It's sad to think that so much heavy lifting is now required to deliver a package as ordinary as this.—T.R. (7/18/94) (First & 62nd Cinemas, Art Greenwich Twin, Chelsea Cinemas, Metro Cinema, and National Twin. . . . ¶ Orpheum VII; through July 28.)

Speed—Trouble on the Los Angeles freeway. Evil mastermind Dennis Hopper (who else?) is a disgruntled psycho who wires a bomb to the bottom of a city bus. Enter Keanu Reeves as a young cop who is one step behind Hopper, but catching up fast. The director is Jan De Bont, who used to be a

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cameraman; this is his first feature, and he sees the plot through in a surge of bright images. The result is clean, delirious, and, yes, speedy—the best big-vehicle-in-peril movie since Clouzot's "The Wages of Fear." You leave the theatre exhausted, and blissed out. With Sandra Bullock, who gives a gutsy performance as a passenger who finds herself behind the wheel of the bus.—A.L. (6/13/94) (Murray Hill Cinemas, First & 62nd Cinemas, Orpheum VII, Waverly, Chelsea Cinemas, Metro Cinema, and Criterion Center.)

True Lies—James Cameron and Arnold Schwarzenegger join forces for their first outing since "Terminator 2," and it's a bumpy ride. The tale begins and ends in a flurry of joke violence; Cameron has decided to spoof what he used to take seriously, and the result, though bright and deafening, feels oddly slack—he loosens the screws, and our interest drops away. Schwarzenegger plays along with this, stumbling into James Bond territory as a suave international spy named Harry Tasker; it's a stiff and rather sad sight. The middle chunk of the film defies belief—not with special effects, unfortunately, but with humdrum misogyny. Harry suspects his wife (Jamie Lee Curtis) of adultery, kidnaps her, and subjects her to a series of humiliations, apparently in an effort to win back her love. Yeah, right. This section has no logical link with the rest of the picture; the two plots are just banged together as a kind of vague discourse on secrecy. Tom Arnold saves the show as Harry's sidekick; Charlton Heston pretty well wrecks it again by turning up with an eyepatch.—A.L. (7/25/94) (Movieland 8th Street Sixplex, 34th Street Showplace, Gotham Cinema, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, Chelsea Cinemas, Ziegfeld, and Regency.)

White—The second in Krzysztof Kieślowski's "Three Colors" trilogy—"Blue" was released here in 1993, and "Red" was recently screened at the Cannes festival—is the story of a Chaplinesque Polish Everyman named Karol Karol (Zbigniew Zamachowski). The picture traces his progress from utter ignominy, in Paris, to a strange kind of personal power, which he acquires in the unsettled new society of his homeland. Kieślowski has abandoned the elegantly abstract style and enigmatic tones of his recent work and has adopted instead a folksy-picaresque manner, which doesn't suit him. Mysteriously, this great filmmaker lacks the mundane skills to keep us interested in a story that has no real spiritual dimension. Kieślowski isn't searching for immanence: everything has only its face value, and you feel as if a light had gone out in the world. Also with Julie Delpy. In Polish and French.—T.R. (6/20/94) (Angelika Film Center, and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

Widows' Peak—In the scintillating opening of this corkscrew comedy (set in the twenties), the director, John Irvin, and the writer, Hugh Leonard, introduce a picturesque Irish spot where the choice hillside property belongs to a pack of wealthy widows led by Joan Plowright. Deftly and hilariously, the filmmakers sketch a snobbish, genteel matriarchy and the influence it has over men like the local dentist (Jim Broadbent) and Plowright's son (Adrian Dunbar). The movie doesn't stay at that high level; the script becomes a single-twist mystery about the enmity between the misfit of Widows' Peak—a poor spinster played by Mia Farrow—and its seductive newcomer, Natasha Richardson. But Irvin's direction has never been more confident and spirited, the casting is witty, and the ensemble work wonderful. The standout is Farrow, who brings force and passion to a tricky role.—M.S. (Village Theatre VII, and Paris.)

At Film Forum, Tony Gatlif's "Latcho Drom."

Wolf—Here's a new idea: a horror film that's frightened of itself. Director Mike Nichols is an old hand at lightly poisoned comedy, but when it comes to violence he shies away. Jack Nicholson plays a man who is bitten by a wolf and then turns into one. It seems such a short journey, since Nicholson, even at his most civilized, never seems more than a grin away from lupine lust. He plays Will Randall, the senior editor at a New York publishing house, who gets sacked by the big boss (Christopher Plummer) in favor of the slimy Stewart (a fine turn by James Spader) and vows revenge. Whether his transformation fills him with commercial greed or with the purer appetites of a wild, pre-industrial age is never quite clear. The movie is smart but confused, sexy but without any sex; the handling of Will's love affair with Laura Alden (Michelle Pfeiffer) reveals a terrible tameness at the heart of the story.—A.L. (7/11/94) (Village Theatre VII, 19th Street East 6, Beekman, and National Twin. . . . ¶ 84th Street Sixplex; through July 28.)

REVIVALS

(The following notes are by Pauline Kael and Michael Sragow.)

Bad Day at Black Rock (1954)—The title may suggest a banal Western, but this was the first film to bring up the wartime outrages against Japanese-Americans (treated also in 1960 in Phil Karlson's "Hell to Eternity"). The story is set in the mythical Southwestern town of Black Rock, where the inhabitants are bound together by the guilty secret of their mistreatment of a Japanese farmer; on this bad day a one-armed stranger (Spencer Tracy) arrives and begins to ask questions. Though "Bad Day at Black Rock" is crudely melodramatic, it is a very superior example of motion-picture craftsmanship. The director, John Sturges, is at his best—each movement and line is exact and economical. The cinematographer, William C. Mellor, uses CinemaScope and color with intelligent care—the compositions seem realistic, yet they have a stylized simplicity. In part because of this, when the violence erupts it's truly shocking. With Robert Ryan, Dean Jagger, Walter Brennan, Anne Francis, John Ericson, Lee Marvin, and Ernest Borgnine. Written by Millard Kaufman.—P.K. (Museum of Modern Art; July 29 and 31.)

Me and My Brother (1969)—The photographer Robert Frank made this film about Julius Orlovsky, a catatonic boy released from a state institution, and how he is taken care of by his brother, Peter Orlovsky, and Allen Ginsberg. Julius appears in the film and is also acted in some sequences by Joseph Chaikin. Frank tries to investigate insanity, methods of treatment, the nature of acting, the nature of what one records on film, and so on; he tries to do too much, and the viewer doesn't get a chance to sort out his own reactions.—P.K. (Anthology Film Archives; July 29-30.)

The Naked Spur (1953)—Anthony Mann's pictorially expansive, dramatically trim Western merges elements of "The Treasure of the Sierra Madre" and gangster movies. Instead of gold there's a reward for the return of a fugitive (Robert Ryan). As his captors try to bring him back to Abilene through the Rockies, he uses psychology—and his innocent trailmate (Janet Leigh)—to divide and conquer them. James Stewart plays the obsessed leader; he needs the bounty to regain his ranch. Ralph Meeker is a volatile ex-soldier and Millard Mitchell (a cross between Walter Huston and Walter Brennan) an unlucky prospector. Mann's tight focus and the exhilaration of the high country (as shot by William C. Mellor) hook the audience. Ryan's laughing-voiced bad guy holds it—he turns lines like "I remember what suits me" into pinnacles of movie sociopathy. Sam Rolfe and Harold Jack Bloom wrote the Oscar-nominated script.—M.S. (Museum of Modern Art; July 28 and 30.)

Night Must Fall (1937)—Robert Montgomery, the foremost romantic light comedian of the early talkies, startled movie audiences when he took this role of a baby-faced killer—a Cockney psychopath carrying a sinister hatbox. Adapted (just barely) by John van Druten from the Emlyn Williams play, this shocker, set in an isolated cottage, is stage-bound but very scary. Intelligent, repressed Rosalind Russell is drawn to the smiling, thick-lipped Montgomery but becomes frightened when she sees him wheedling his way into the affections of a silly, spoiled old lady (Dame May Whitty). The direction, by Richard Thorpe, is somewhat ponderous (in the we-want-to-be-sure-you-are-catching-every-single-detail M-G-M manner), but the penny-dreadful theatrics are gruesomely effective. This is one of the rare movies in which the viewer loathes the potential victim (Whitty) and still doesn't want to see her get it. With Alan Marshal, Merle Tottenham, Kathleen Harrison, and E. E. Clive.—P.K. (Museum of Modern Art; Aug. 1.)

Twentieth Century (1934)—A first-rate hardboiled farce about theatrical personalities. John Barrymore was a great farceur, and his performance as the egomaniac producer Oscar Jaffe is a roaring caricature of theatrical drive and temperament. It was Carole Lombard's performance as Jaffe's protégée, Lily Garland (née Mildred Plotka), who has become a movie star, that established her as a comedienne. Lombard's talents here are not of the highest, but her spirits are, and in her skintight satins she incarnates the giddy glamour of thirties comedy. Most of the action takes place on the crack train of the title—the Twentieth Century, going from Chicago to New York—which represented the latest thing in speed and luxury. The script, by Hecht and MacArthur, from their play (which was a reworking of Bruce Millholland's play "Napoleon on Broadway"), is freely, carelessly irreverent, with affectionate, corny ethnic humor and wisecracks about religion. Howard Hawks directed in a fast, entertaining style, punching up the lines. With Ralph Forbes.—P.K. (American Museum of the Moving Image; July 31.)

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BORIS YELTSIN

THE STRUGGLE FOR RUSSIA

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TIMES BOOKS

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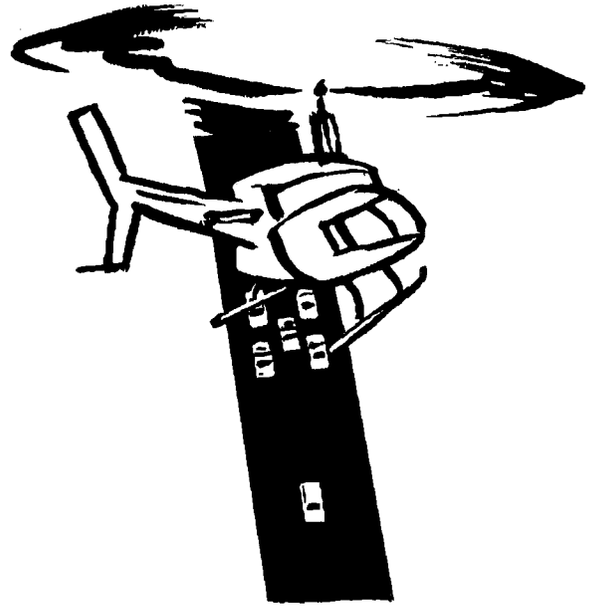
THE TALK OF THE TOWN

HOT PURSUIT

A FEW hours before Bob Tur, the helicopter reporter for KCBS-TV, in Los Angeles, began chasing O. J. Simpson and his police escort along the L.A. freeway, he sat down with Marika Tur, his wife, co-pilot, and video cameraperson, and together they attempted to *become* O.J., so that they could beat all the other Los Angeles helicopter reporters to wherever O.J. might be. Remembering this the other day, Tur spoke in the loud, clear, and animated voice of a man used to talking to people over the sound of a helicopter engine: "So it's around five in the afternoon, and we were sitting there reading about all this, and I said to Marika, 'We've *got* to find this guy, right?' So we sat back and we thought, Now, where would we go if we were him? And then we said, 'The cemetery! He's gonna go to the cemetery of his ex-wife!' So then it's five-fifty-seven and we're flying in this area—it's called the El Toro Y—and nobody's really noticing us, 'cause there's a lot of helicopters in L.A. So we go, Oh, man! We were right! It turns out that O.J. was actually going to go to the cemetery, but the police were there. So we head out, and there he is on the freeway! It's O. J. Simpson. And there's the police pursuing him. And we couldn't believe it. I mean, there he is! *O. J. Simpson!* So we flip on the switch and we're live."

To the public, the rest, of course, is history: Tur's voice tracking the path of the white Bronco and rattling off each exit, each overpass. But for Bob Tur it was just another in a long series of coups in the field of helicopter reporting. In fact, if Los Angeles is the capital of helicopter news coverage—the spread-out, skyscraperless city where perpetual rush hours thwart would-be roving reporters—then Bob Tur is helicopter news's preëminent practitioner. Of the half-dozen or so chopper pilots buzzing through the skies of L.A., he is the one most likely to be seen at a television-newsworthy police stakeout, fire, or general-disaster scene. "It's like the Wild West out here, man, with police chasing cars, and the guys hanging out the windows shooting guns," he said. "It happens all the time. I personally have covered a hundred and twenty-eight police pursuits. I'm sure that's more than two times anyone else."

Unlike most newspeople flying over major cities, Tur, who is thirty-four, began his career as a traditional reporter—one who was determined to arrive at the scene of a story absolutely first. In 1983, after eight years of working for wire services and radio stations, and then learning video at a television station, he got his pilot's license and tried his hand first at airplane-assisted reporting, which proved impractical, and then at reporting by helicopter.



In the beginning, the Turs concentrated on breaking news, trying just to sell enough footage to cover their helicopter costs. Then they realized the value of a helicopter as a paparazzi tool, and began shooting hard-to-cover events such as the wedding of Sean Penn and Madonna. The last time the Turs' work became national news was when they filmed the Los Angeles riots and caught the beating of Reginald Denny. "For the first time in history, my wife and I shot footage of the spark that caused one of the country's worst riots," Tur said proudly. "And they were exclusive images. We've beaten everybody on everything."

The other day, when he was speaking with us, pacing around his home with a cordless phone, he said that he had slept late, as a reward for his work the day before, when he had been investigating one of the investigators for the defense, hoping to get another scoop. But downtime is unusual for Tur and his wife. When they are not shooting exclusive footage, they are often off rescuing people. In 1988, for example, they saved fifty-four people when a seaside hotel in Redondo Beach fell into the water during a

ILLUSTRATIONS BY DAVID MAZZUCCHELLI

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DRIVERS IN CENTRAL PARK HAVE HAD SOME UNUSUAL FARES, AS RELATED HERE IN
TALES FROM THE CARRIAGE TRADE
by CAROL LAY
MEL GRIMES SPENT A LOT OF TIME REASSURING A NICE TOURIST COUPLE THAT A RIDE IN THE PARK AT 2:30 A.M. WOULD BE SAFE AND UNEVENTFUL.
AND I WAS JUST ABOUT TO POINT OUT THE SKATING RINK WHEN WE SEE A NAKED MAN WALKING AROUND—NOT A STITCH ON HIM.
ONE OF PETE LENEGHAN'S FARES INVITED HIM TO SKINNY-DIP WITH HER IN THE LAKE. DID HE?
OH, NO, NO—I HAD TO KEEP MY EYE ON THE HORSE.
BUT IF THE HORSE GOES IN THERE I WAS IN, TOO.

storm. Sometimes when they are between stories, they hear that a search-and-rescue mission in the Los Angeles area has been aborted, and they pick up the search on their own, in an effort to hone their aerial tracking skills. Naturally, all this has got them some notice. "We've been talking to the Fox network about a show about pursuits—helicopter pursuits," Tur said. "And then Paramount is talking to us about a show that would be from a helicopter. It could be from anyplace in the country, but it would be shot from a helicopter. I like that. And then the Canadian people who made 'Lonesome Dove' are interested in making something based on me and my wife. I mean, we've rescued sixty-six people, seven planes, and one dog. That's a lot."

O.J. ON-LINE

JOHN MAMMOSER is a thirty-six-year-old native of Buffalo whose childhood coincided with O. J. Simpson's years of football glory with the hometown Bills. "The first couple of days after he got arrested, I was kind of depressed," Mammoser said the other day. "I mean, O.J. was kind of like Elvis or Santa Claus back home." But Mammoser got over it. In fact, his spirits rebounded almost immediately. On the third day after Simpson was arrested, Mammoser started putting O. J. Simpson jokes on the voice mail at the radio network, in Los Angeles, where he works as a comedy writer.

"It started just for fun, kind of like a hobby," Mammoser recalled. "But then somebody put the number out on CompuServe, and another person had it on Prodigy, and someone else put it on the Internet, and then the New York *Daily News* printed it, and all of a sudden we were getting four thousand calls in a single day. It kind of destroyed our system at work. No voice mail could take that kind of volume. There was this poor woman, on maternity leave with a little kid, who kept getting all these calls because she had our number in the 301 area code, and ours is 310." So Mammoser transferred the jokes to a 900 number, which charges callers ninety-nine cents per minute. As the material on the joke line makes clear, Mammoser's Buffalo roots mean a lot to him. "It's unlikely that O.J. used a knife," one joke goes, "because the Buffalo Bills have a history of choking." He also has a shrewd eye for current events. "O.J.'s got a six-hour alibi," according to another joke. "He was waiting to get served at Denny's." Still, the bulk of the jokes in Mammoser's œuvre are pretty gross. Jeffrey Dahmer figures in several. So do Pez dispensers. "I'm sure it's in bad taste," he said. "But it is what everyone in America is talking about."

So far, Mammoser's rewards from the joke-line business have been more spiritual than financial. "I did my first joke line in Dallas a couple of years ago," he said. "I started putting jokes on my answering machine, and it sort of ticked my roommate off when we began getting three hundred calls a day. So I set up a 976 line. It cost me thirteen hundred dollars, and after I set it up I didn't have any money for advertising. I just about broke even." His O. J. Simpson joke line—900-988-7200—faces a similar fate. "It cost me fifteen hundred to start it up, and then it's three hundred dollars a month. I still don't have any money for advertising, and we're only getting about two hundred and fifty calls on a good day. We should break even, but I'm not sure of it yet." Mammoser's problems may be over, though, if he can believe the office voice mail. The O.J. jokes are now gone from there, of course, but the other day they had been replaced by the unmistakable voice of Ed McMahon. "You've just won ten million dollars in the American Family Sweepstakes!" Ed said. "Congratulations!"

DUNNE'S HOLLYWOOD

HOW can you pay an at-home visit to the writers John Gregory Dunne and Joan Didion—who lived in

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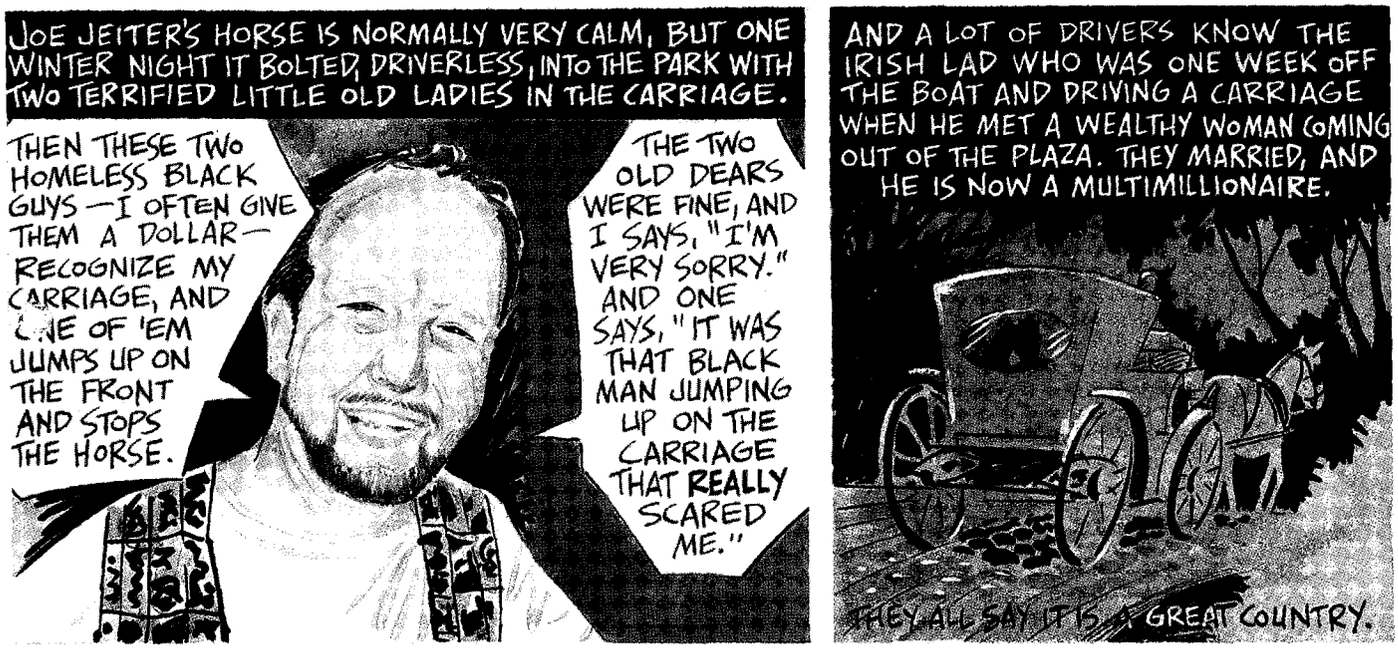
JOE JEITER'S HORSE IS NORMALLY VERY CALM, BUT ONE WINTER NIGHT IT BOLTED, DRIVERLESS, INTO THE PARK WITH TWO TERRIFIED LITTLE OLD LADIES IN THE CARRIAGE.
THEN THESE TWO HOMELESS BLACK GUYS—I OFTEN GIVE THEM A DOLLAR—RECOGNIZE MY CARRIAGE, AND ONE OF 'EM JUMPS UP ON THE FRONT AND STOPS THE HORSE.
THE TWO OLD DEARS WERE FINE, AND I SAYS, "I'M VERY SORRY." AND ONE SAYS, "IT WAS THAT BLACK MAN JUMPING UP ON THE CARRIAGE THAT REALLY SCARED ME."
AND A LOT OF DRIVERS KNOW THE IRISH LAD WHO WAS ONE WEEK OFF THE BOAT AND DRIVING A CARRIAGE WHEN HE MET A WEALTHY WOMAN COMING OUT OF THE PLAZA. THEY MARRIED, AND HE IS NOW A MULTIMILLIONAIRE.
THEY ALL SAY IT IS A GREAT COUNTRY.

Los Angeles for twenty-four years, ten of them in Brentwood Park, before famously pulling up stakes and heading for Manhattan's Upper East Side, in 1988—and not bring up the subject of O. J. Simpson? Mr. Dunne, who's covering the Simpson case for *The New York Review of Books*, is understandably reluctant to give away his best stuff, but he will say, teasingly, that the Broncoled formation of police cars reminded him of the aquatic chorines in an Esther Williams water ballet. Actually, his interest in O.J. is more than just journalistic. Mr. Dunne's new novel, "Playland," which is about to be published by Random House, concerns the spectacular childhood and pathetic old age of a juvenile movie star named Blue Tyler, and by the time her longest-buried secret is discovered by the media, after a narrative in which sex and homicide have held considerable sway, the story has an eerily familiar ring. No one has tracked the habits of modern media sharks as clinically, and as hilariously, as Mr. Dunne does here.

He didn't set out to write about what he calls, in O.J.'s case, "the inflation of celebrity." He started writing the novel about Blue Tyler's daughter—a contemporary Sister Carrie—but he couldn't make the book work. (For his next novel, he plans to go back to the daughter, whom he now imagines living in Washington.) As he was finding his footing, he and his wife turned down an offer to write a screenplay about Bugsy Siegel, the gangster who went Hollywood. Instead, they wrote about a gangster who falls in love with a teen-age movie star. The script went unproduced, but the process helped Mr. Dunne shift the novel's focus toward Blue herself.

The actual writing, however, was fitful. And, even as Mr. Dunne was showing signs of New York-fuelled productivity (his 1989 memoir, "Harp"; his 1990 essay collection, "Crooning"), he was having trouble working out the trajectory of Blue's life. It was only while he was recovering from open-heart surgery and then blood poisoning, in 1991, that he honed the final plotline: as the result of a hardboiled romance with a New York gangster, Blue Tyler would disappear in disgrace from Hollywood and resurface forty-five years later, in 1991, in a Detroit trailer park.

The movie business—or, at least, Los Angeles—has tended to show up frequently in Mr. Dunne's work ever since he graduated from Princeton, in 1954, but as a novelist he has written about Hollywood only once before, in the 1987 novel "The Red White and Blue," and then only glancingly. "I did not want to write a roman à clef about contemporary Hollywood," he says. "I think contemporary Hollywood is terribly boring." At the same time, he adds, he couldn't help making use of the many show people he met after he moved to Los Angeles, in 1964—a time when studio-era dinosaurs were far from extinct.

As far as "Playland" is concerned, he'll own up to a few telltale footprints. A *Life* photograph of Natalie Wood, snapped when she was a young woman, and showing her surrounded by middle-aged handlers, found its way into the book, even though Mr. Dunne maintains that in no way was she Blue Tyler's prototype. And he worked in parts of a police report of a still unsolved 1944 Hollywood murder involving an old schoolmate of Shirley Temple. Further correlations—the most notable being whether one of the book's main witnesses to Blue Tyler's past, a "dear"-dropping director named Chuckie O'Hara, owes anything to George Cukor—are up to the reader. Mr. Dunne admits that he and his wife were friendly with Mr. Cukor. And what else? "I wanted O'Hara to be gay. I wanted him to be in the war. I wanted him to take the Fifth and then I wanted him to name names. I wanted him to be an anti-Semite," he says. "He's my favorite character in the entire book." ♦

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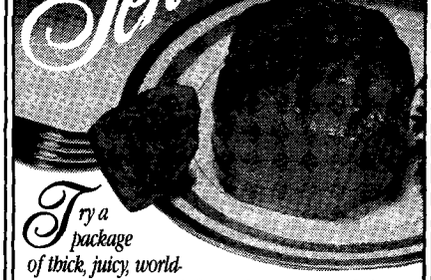

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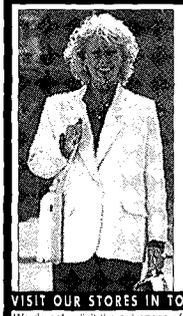

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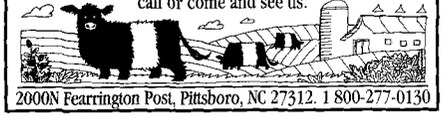

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THE RISE OF KWEISI MFUME

From Haiti to the crime bill, the Congressional Black Caucus has won new power in White House dealmaking, and Kweisi Mfume has won new power in the caucus.

BY PETER J. BOYER

JUST over two years ago, Kweisi Mfume was a junior Democratic congressman from Baltimore who was impatient for influence and exasperated by a seniority system that kept even third-term congressmen (like him) on the back rows. Congress, he believed, was stifled by a mind-set from an obsolete system under which young members, trying to get ahead, "scratched where they didn't itch, shuffled when they were not nervous, and bowed their heads when they were not engaged in prayer." In this respect, Mfume was hardly distinguishable (except for his name, which is Ghanaian and is pronounced Kwah-ee-see Oom-foo-may) from any of the other congressional backbenchers with frustrated ambitions. Then, in the summer of 1992, he found a shortcut to the power loop. Foreseeing a Democratic Presidential victory, coupled with big gains by black congressional candidates, Mfume recognized that the Congressional Black Caucus stood to become a significant force in the new Washington. He campaigned hard for, and won, the position of caucus chairman, and his calculations about the 1992 elections proved accurate. The Black Caucus swelled from twenty-six members to forty, and thus established a voting bloc whose favor would be crucial to a President with a forty-three-per-cent mandate.

Mfume's gambit has since been amply validated, as on one evening last May when President Clinton tracked him down by telephone at a Baltimore television studio and interrupted a taping to tell him he planned to withdraw Lani Guinier's nomination as head of the Justice Department's civil-rights division. The President wanted political cover, but Mfume refused to give it. The two men argued back and forth for several minutes, with Clinton defending his decision, and Mfume telling the President why he was wrong, before the conversation ended, cordially. Only then did Clinton call Guinier, to inform his old friend that her nomination was dead.

Such deference is the tribute paid to a voting bloc in a time when legislative margins tend to be measured in the single digits. The Black Caucus is far from monolithic, but its members are unified often enough to wield swing votes in such contests. "I call it the new arithmetic," Mfume says. When the President won passage of his budget package last year, the caucus was able to claim credit for delivering the key votes—votes that were yielded only after the caucus won more than ten billion dollars' worth of pet concessions (among them the Earned Income Tax Credit and the Mickey Leland Hunger Act). "They are a major force in the Congress," Richard Gephardt, the House Majority Leader, says of the caucus members. "They're good. They know what they're doing, and they know what they want."

Mfume has spent much of the last several weeks tormenting the White House over the pending crime bill, which Clinton desperately wants as a boost for his own popularity and to give Democrats a sexy legislative victory for the fall campaign. As a congressional conference committee waited through June and into July, Mfume haggled with the White House over a Racial Justice Act, which would give convicted killers the right to appeal their death sentences based on statistical evidence of racial imbalance. Mfume, representing the Black Caucus in backstage negotiations, insisted upon Clinton's endorsement of the racial-justice provision; Clinton's emissaries, wanting to please, sought compromise language that wouldn't alienate conservatives or contradict the President's own pro-

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death-penalty posture. No common ground was found, and finally an exasperated Clinton decreed that the crime bill should move forward without the provision or risk being lost altogether. Mfume, however, refused to play the good soldier; instead of quietly acceding to the President's decision, he publicly scolded the White House for its lack of "respect" and declared that the majority of the caucus would oppose the legislation, seriously endangering the bill's chances. That forced the White House to scramble, with Clinton aides lobbying the caucus in the hope of achieving one of the Administration's trademark squeak-by victories.

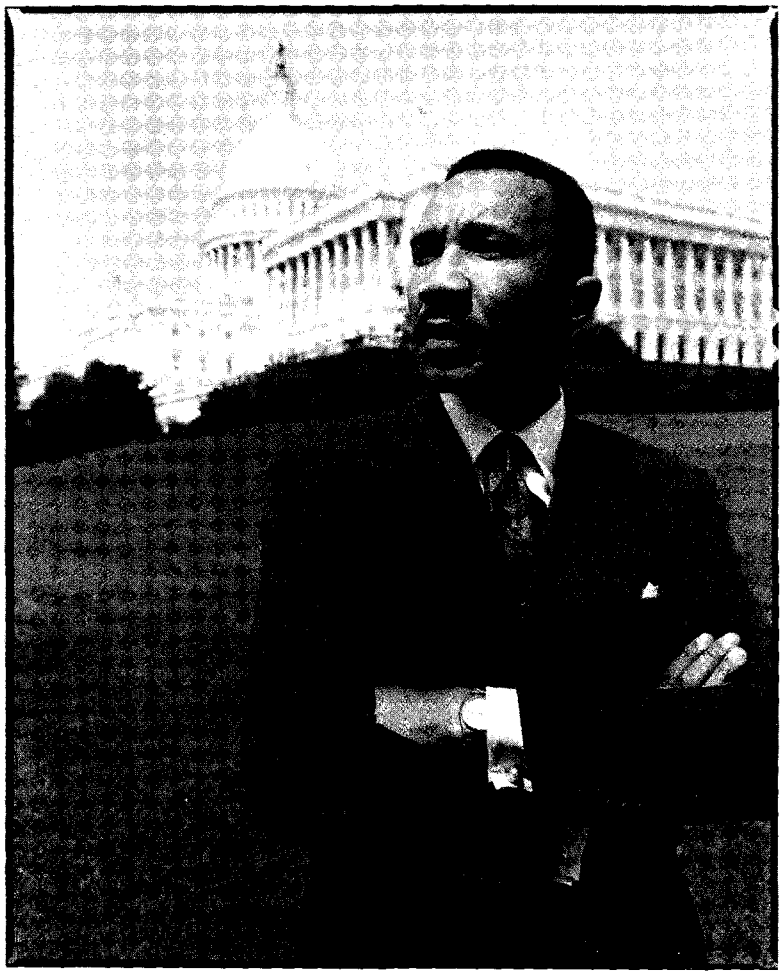
Mfume says that the caucus has "nonnegotiable" demands on health care and on the President's proposed welfare reform as well. But no issue has been more associated with the Black Caucus than the Clinton Administration's policy on Haiti. The common perception in Washington that the United States plans to return exiled President Jean-Bertrand Aristide to power through military intervention, possibly as early as this week, credits (or blames) the Black Caucus for this turn in American foreign policy. For the past few weeks, Mfume has been a hot topic on the political airwaves, from Rush Limbaugh, who ridicules the influence of the caucus, to John McLaughlin, who referred to him as "General Mfume" and said he "is telling the Secretary of Defense how to actually conduct the invasion."

While it may be absurd to assert, as Republican Senator Larry Pressler does, that American Haiti policy is now "foreign policy by the Black Caucus," and that invasion is a quid pro quo for giving up the racial-justice provision of the crime bill, it is plain that the Clinton Administration's evolving Haiti policy is driven by domestic politics and that the caucus is a central factor therein. The Black Caucus's official position, adopted in a resolution last October, calls for a "protective military force" to insure Aristide's return.

From the moment of Aristide's removal from office by the Haitian military, in September of 1991, the caucus has made his return the "central focus" of its Haiti position, and has—along with Randall Robinson, the executive director of the TransAfrica lobby—forced the issue to the top of Clinton's foreign-policy agenda. (Mfume and the caucus are said to have brokered the ending of Robinson's hunger strike with the Clinton Administration.) Even before Aristide arrived in Washington with his government-in-exile, he had been visited in Venezuela by Mfume and New York Representative Charles Rangel. Allegiance to Aristide and an insistence that he be returned to office are, in fact, two of the only issues on which the caucus has been unanimous.

Significantly, the Black Caucus has succeeded in framing the Haiti problem as a social-justice issue, rather than as a foreign-policy issue, thus giving its position the weight of moral righteousness. In a letter to President Clinton, for example, Representative Major Owens, of New York, likened the President's situation to that of Abraham Lincoln before the Emancipation Proclamation, thereby equating the reinstallation of Aristide to the freeing of American slaves. This line is lent force by the very real discrepancy between American policy toward Haitian refugees (interdiction) and Cuban refugees (the welcome mat); the Haitian problem is, inevitably, a racial issue. "If Haitians were not black," Mfume says, "we would not sit back and watch this murder occur."

Mfume is a signal figure in politics today: a new kind of black leader, arisen from outside the civil-rights struggle, and a new kind of politician, wired to a power source beyond the traditional structures. "Power must take on the personification of leadership to be precise and focussed," Jesse Jackson, whose own star Mfume has occasionally eclipsed, says. "Kweisi embodies that personification. He's a well-studied, smart, dedicated person, who has integrity and is fearless."



KEN SCHLES/ONYX

Presidents Reagan and Bush could afford to ignore the Black Caucus. President Clinton can't. Mfume calls it "the new arithmetic."

THE Father's Day service this year at St. Edward's Catholic Church in west Baltimore was no greeting-card homage to dear Dad but, rather, a call to arms in a war for cultural survival. St. Edward's, like many African-American congregations, calls the holiday Men's Day, and uses it as an occasion to focus on the imperilment embedded in the daily lives of young men in the black

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community and to rally its men to the challenge. Outside the church, hundreds of men gathered in brutal heat; inside, seated in pews, women waited, cooling themselves with hand fans provided by a local funeral home. The men made their entrance in an exhilarating ceremony called the Procession of Warriors, led by a men's choir singing a martial hymn ("We are soldiers in the army. We've got to fight, although we have to die"). Marching at the end of the procession, in the place of honor, was Kweisi Mfume, the guest speaker.

Mfume's appearances in his district are charged with a peculiar intensity, such as accompanies visitations from a close relative who has become a celebrity. His usual public posture is one of studied sobriety, punctuated by narrow-lidded eyes and a thin mustache that lend him an almost austere aspect; but the old neighborhood has a loosening effect. Before and after the Men's Day service, people up and down the street greeted him in a very personal way, with men exchanging elaborate ritual handshakes, and women embracing him and whispering in his ear. When he spoke in church, he began in the quiet, measured, almost scholarly tones of his press conferences, until he reached the point of his homily, about the meaning of manhood, and then he became a preacher. "You're not a man because you killed somebody," he said to a chorus of "Amen"s. "You're a man when you know how to heal somebody. . . . We must say, even from experience, brother, you're not a man if you can make a baby, you're a man when you learn how to raise a baby. That's when you become a man." With this, Mfume jabbed at his chest with the forefingers of both hands, as if he were directing his message partly at himself—and, indeed, the congregation knew that he was.

Mfume speaks with particular authority on the subject of fathers and sons, of men struggling to do the right thing for their children, and of the consequences when the struggle is abandoned. He was once known as Frizzell Gray, and was just another lost boy on the streets of Baltimore in the nineteen-sixties. He dropped out of school and joined a gang, often barely escaping jail. Along the way, he fathered five children with three women in the space of five years. Now, as we drove away from the church in his black Lincoln Mark VIII, he told me that part of his mission was to show himself to the young men of his old neighborhood as often as he could. "My purpose," he said, "is to illuminate the possible."

It is difficult to reconcile the smooth Capitol Hill power broker in the black Lincoln with the street hoodlum named Frizzell Gray. But Mfume, who is an amateur actor, knows the value of a good script; in a political era that values personal drama (e.g., "The Man from Hope"), he embraces his own narrative of redemption much as the George Bush–Bob Dole generation did its war record. As Mfume tells the story (which he has contracted with a publisher to make into a book), Frizzell Gray, born in 1948, grew up in and around Baltimore, first in the small black enclave of Turner's Station, in the shadows of the smokestacks of Bethlehem Steel, and then in the row-house neighborhoods of black west Baltimore. He lived with his mother and three younger stepsisters and an abusive stepfather, whom he loathed. His mother, Mary Elizabeth, was a devout Roman Catholic, who nurtured her son's talents and insisted that he make the most of them. Frizzell was small for his age—he was nicknamed Pee-Wee by his family—and he is remembered as having been a serious, even a bookish child. "Kweisi had the thirst for knowledge," Carl Swann, a lifelong friend, says. "He would come out and play, and then sometimes you wouldn't see him for weeks, and he'd be in the house reading and studying." When Frizzell was not yet thirteen, his stepfather, who was a truck driver, left home, and life took a distinctly Dickensian turn. Mary Elizabeth found work as a maid, when she could get it, and the family lived a hand-to-mouth existence in a series of rented row houses, ever in anticipation of the next eviction. Then, when Frizzell was sixteen, Mary Elizabeth fell ill; over a period of months, she grew weaker, and long, late-night conversations that Frizzell had cherished became more strained, until one night, Mfume recalls, she died in his arms. He rode to the local hospital, and stayed by his mother's side until a doctor told him, "You know, your mother is dead. She is not going to wake up."

Frizzell returned to a household of which, he realized, he was now the head. After a time, there was a knock on the door, and Frizzell opened it to see a man he'd known all his life as Mr. Charles, a friend of his mother's who had always been especially kind to the boy. Mr. Charles worked as a sometime chef, and often brought food, either sto-

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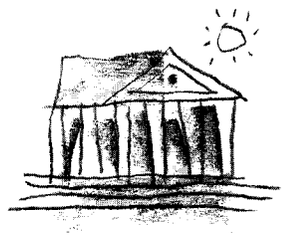
len or left over, from work. Frizzell was happy to see Mr. Charles. "I couldn't think of anybody else that I would want it to be," Mfume recalls. "I immediately went to say, 'I'm sorry. Do you know that Mama died?' And he said, 'I already know.' And he just looked at me and said, 'I'm your father.' I looked back at him, and I wasn't shocked or astonished. I just almost felt like my mother was hugging me. I didn't know how he was my father, and I knew he would explain, but I knew he didn't lie to me. He came in and he threw his arm around me, and we sat down on the couch, and I was really crying then. And he said, 'Your mother never really had a chance to tell you what I'm about to tell you, but this is the rest of the story.' We sat there for hours, just talking, and he told me about how my mother and he had fallen in love, and that her family didn't want her seeing him, because he was running around—a real slick guy, a dapper dresser, and a ladies' man and a numbers man. And how he had developed a heroin habit, and he had let her down and they broke up, and she ultimately met my stepfather, who promised her security and everything else, and who eventually adopted me."

The revelation may have been comforting but was of little practical consequence, for Mr. Charles was either unable or unwilling to accept responsibility for his son. The family was broken up, with the girls going to live with their grandmother, and young Frizzell moving in with two uncles. He quit school the week he buried his mother.

Mfume says that he took whatever jobs he could get—shining shoes, working in a bread factory, and the like—believing that it was up to him to provide for his sisters. As his aspirations shrank, his bitterness grew. "I was very bitter, and I kept it inside of me," he says now. "I couldn't understand why this God that my mother thought was so divine and worshipped just unrelentingly had come into our family in that way. I mean, we had enough problems as it was, because she was a single parent, and we moved from house to house—it was difficult for her, as a maid, to stay on top of all the bills. Why, of all the people to take, would it be my mother? And to split up my family like that . . ." Soon he was hanging around with the very street toughs that his mother had told him to avoid, and eventually he joined the neighborhood gang. His rite of passage was to follow a drunk man to a side street and mug him; he was instructed to do whatever was necessary, but not to return without the man's wallet. "I *had* to come back with his wallet, but I didn't want to hurt the man," he recalls. "I had no desire to hurt anybody in my life. So what I did was to grab him, push him down to the ground, rip his wallet out, and hope that he didn't jump at me. But he did. And I had to hit him." After that, the slide was steep and fast, and Frizzell's life became an endless round of cheap wine and street-corner machismo, as he awaited a turn in jail, or something worse. His friend Carl Swann, who is now an assistant to the congressman, says, "He was like any other city-raised young black man—he was in the struggle."



But Frizzell Gray knew that if his life came to ruin he would be the cause, and one night in the late sixties, after an epiphany that he still cannot explain, he decided to walk away from the streets. "People thought I was crazy," Mfume recalls. "But that night I left that corner and prayed and asked for God's forgiveness and asked my mother to please forgive me this one time for letting her down. I *had* let her down—that was not the way I was raised. I said that if I had just one more chance I would never, ever again go back to that, and I would try to find a way to atone for it. And I cried on the floor that night on my knees. I made a very real promise to myself, to my mother, and to God that night—that if I could just get to that point and get one more chance I would do everything I could do to make a difference."

FOR his new life, Frizzell Gray gave himself a new name. In a consummate act of self-reinvention, the fatherless child of the streets once known as Pee-Wee became Kweisi Mfume—"the conquering son of kings." He had to fight to get out of his gang: he was "banked," or jumped, by his former companions regularly until they decided that he was a lost cause and left him alone. A man called Diamond Jim Sears, who had known him since he was a boy and had witnessed his descent and his climb back, gave him a job at WEBB, a radio station of which he was general manager. WEBB was a popular black station, owned by the soul singer James Brown, and Kwa, as Sears called him, was thrilled to hold even a menial job there. He did errands for the city's star jocks, men with names like Fat Daddy Johnson and Big Al Jefferson. He was infatuated with the life and was determined to make it on the air himself. He sat for hours in front of a mirror, talking into a recorder, working on his diction and locution, perfecting a delivery that his colleagues still marvel at. Eventually, Sears gave him his chance, letting him read the news during the week and serve as host of his own show on weekends. He quickly developed a singular style, eschewing boisterous jock rap and dance music in favor of cool dialogue and jazz. "Kweisi was a d.j. who was very progressive," Swann says. "He could handle bebop, but bebop wasn't his whole makeup. His thing was communication, the freedom of life. He spoke on issues that concerned the people. He was the *man*."

Mfume's show, called "Ebony Reflections," was a hit, but James Brown hated it. "Brown was saying, 'Well, Mr. Sears, we've got to put somebody else in on that slot,' " Sears recalls. "I said, 'Yes, sir, no problem.' We kept him hid for two years. Every time Brown came into town, I'd tell Kwa to take the day off. He was too advanced for Brown, back then—'69, '70. 'He's just too hard to dance to,' Brown said. 'I would stay with soul music, whooping and hollering and getting down.' Kweisi's thing was smooth. Very smooth. Silky." Mfume considered an acting career, and even went to New York for a time, but gave up that idea. "It was a lot more involved than what he really had the time to do," Swann says. "They wanted him to prepare himself, and he was on a much faster track."

Mfume took classes and earned a high-school equivalency degree in 1968. Soon after, he entered the Community College of Baltimore, and became a campus radical, joining the Free South Africa movement and nurturing his own Afrocentrism. Eventu-

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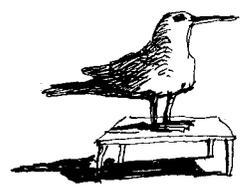
ally, Mfume graduated magna cum laude from Morgan State and earned a master's degree in liberal arts from Johns Hopkins.

Along the way, he discovered women. His mentor Diamond Jim Sears wasn't surprised. "Any disk jockey that's been on the air, women, you understand, have a tendency to flock to him," he says. Mfume's attraction had consequences, and by the time he was twenty-two he was the father of five boys. "I don't know if I found sex or if sex found me, but every time I did it, it seems as if someone was pregnant," Mfume told me. "It was a harrowing experience." He did not marry any of the women who bore his sons, but on learning of each pregnancy he went to the girl's parents and promised that he would do his part, he says. The women eventually married ("They are all good women," he says), and he says he continued to help to support his sons—Ronald, Donald, Kevin, Keith, and Michael, who are now in their twenties. ("One of the reasons I was so glad to get this job," he says of his 1986 election to Congress, "is that for the first time in my life I didn't have to hold down two jobs.")

An advantage of deriving one's own story from street lore is that some facts are less easily found than, say, one's school record; and here, at least, Mfume's version seems to have undergone certain revisions. When I asked Mfume's first serious girlfriend—the mother of Donald and Ronald—whether Mfume had paid her child support, my query was greeted with incredulous laughter, of considerable duration. "I don't remember it that way," she said at last. As she tells it, both times she became pregnant by Mfume, her parents strongly urged matrimony. "But he said no. My mother said, 'You're going to,' and he said, 'Oh, no I'm not, either.' And I think that's when it really started being rocky." She offered the additional information that Mfume had been briefly married, and that her relationship with him ended when she met one of his other girlfriends. "You know how men are," she said. "He had told me one thing and his best friend had told me another thing, and I met her when she came up to the car and wanted to fight me. That's how I met her."



However, the woman verified much of the rest of Mfume's account ("Looking back, I realize he was a true hoodlum in the beginning"), including his sudden and mysterious turnaround, which she attributes to his mother's lasting influence. She said that Mfume did eventually help to support her boys, at her prodding ("I used to give him the blues—I stayed on his case, and, finally, he did"), and that when he had time he spent weekends with Donald and Ronald. "His time was pretty much not there," Donald, who is a finance major at Howard University, says. "But on the weekends we'd always go to the park or a baseball game or somewhere, just go down to the harbor or just cruise around town." When the boys were growing up, Mfume wanted them to meet his father, their grandfather—an endeavor complicated by the fact that the old man was frequently in jail. One day, Mfume told his boys that they were going to visit their grandfather "at work," and they went to the county jail. It proved an awkward experience. "He didn't know I was bringing them, so when he came in and sat down at the table across from us he started crying," Mfume says. "He'd just had pictures of them up until that point. Then my kids said, 'Why is he crying on the job?' "

In his office, Mfume proudly displays a photograph of his sons with him, and notes that all five have either gone to college or have entered the armed forces. (There have been rough spots, though, including the arrest in Atlanta two weeks ago of Michael Mfume on a rape charge. Michael, who is twenty-four and makes music videos, was reared mostly by his maternal grandmother, because of persistent disagreements with his mother, according to the mother of Donald and Ronald Mfume. Michael denies the charge; he was freed last week on thirty-five thousand dollars' bail. His father said in a statement, "No parent ever wants to get the dreaded call that their son or daughter has been charged with violating the law," and expressed confidence that Michael was innocent.)

Mfume's radio show and his campus activities drew him into politics, but his approach was problematic. In 1978, wearing a dashiki and spouting slogans, he stormed into the Baltimore City Council chamber, hurled himself into the seat of one of the community's elder statesmen, Dr. Emerson Julian, and declared, "This seat will be mine!" A few months later, Dr. Julian died, and Mfume decided to run for his seat, despite having no support from the local Democratic Party bosses. An influential Baltimore businessman advised him to tone down and dress up—advice he took seriously. With the help of a core group of supporters, mostly college friends, he mounted an underdog campaign. His campaign theme was "Beat the Bosses," and he won by just three votes ("the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost," Swann says). In office, Mfume was inclined at first to maintain his outsider's posture, fighting ferociously with the mayor, William D. Schaefer, and with fellow-councilmen—an approach that broadened his public identity but hampered his effectiveness. He eventually mastered the concept of consensus, and became an accomplished politican, ready in his mind, at least, to run for the congressional seat vacated in 1986 by Parren Mitchell.

Baltimore has a rich tradition of energetic black politics, dominated in recent history by the Mitchell family—particularly the late Clarence Mitchell, Jr., a longtime lobbyist for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, and his brother Parren. In 1986, the anointed Democratic candidate was Clarence Mitchell III, then a state legislator, and Mfume found himself once again fighting the bosses. It was a difficult primary campaign, and it degenerated into an ugly one. Mfume had six Democratic opponents besides Mitchell, and one of them was a mentor—his college political-science professor, Augustus Adair. But the worst moment came after Mfume won the nomination, when his Republican opponent publicly revealed the fact that Mfume was the father of five boys born out of wedlock. "He pulled all of us over to the side and pretty much let us know what was happening," Donald, who was in high school at the time, recalls. "In politics, your life is an open book. It didn't really affect me much. Well, it did in that I had people coming up to me and asking me things—all different kinds of people."

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The details of Mfume's private life did not harm his candidacy, however. He won the election, and in 1987 he went to Washington as District Seven's congressman.

Mfume now lives in a brick colonial house in a Baltimore suburb. He has box seats behind third base at Camden Yards. He wears tasselled loafers with double-breasted suits and monogrammed shirts with French cuffs. And, according to those who seem to know, he is considered something of a Washington heartthrob; the conservative political commentator Mary Matalin ranks him as one of the ten most attractive men in the capital. One of Mfume's friends, the actress and writer Anna Deavere Smith, laughs when she tells of a recent evening she spent with him in New York. She had been nominated for two Tony Awards for her show about race in America, "Twilight: Los Angeles, 1992," and Mfume escorted her to the awards ceremony. "He *is* charismatic—there is no doubt about that," she says. "People just come to him, all kinds of people. They just come right to him. We were leaving Sardi's, and I was getting into the car and he was following me, and somebody came running after him looking for an autograph. And he said, 'No, no, you want her.' And this person said, 'No. I know you. You're who I want.' "

Such scenes are fairly common. A few weeks ago, while awaiting Mfume's arrival at another black-tie awards dinner, I asked one of the hostesses of the event several times whether the congressman had arrived. Finally, she answered me by saying, "Has my heart started fluttering yet? When it does—mine and those of about thirty-five other women—you'll know he's here."

In the past, selection of the Black Caucus chairman had always been a matter of pro-forma "elections," but in 1992, with the "new arithmetic," came the first true contest for the position. Mfume announced his candidacy early—in July of that year—and he was challenged by Craig Washington, of Houston. Although the caucus vote, that December, was surprisingly one-sided—27–9 in favor of Mfume—the chairman has since been learning the lesson that the Black Caucus is not a monolith and that his victory was a

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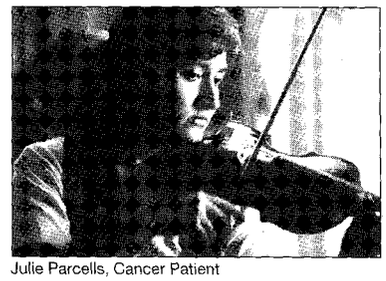
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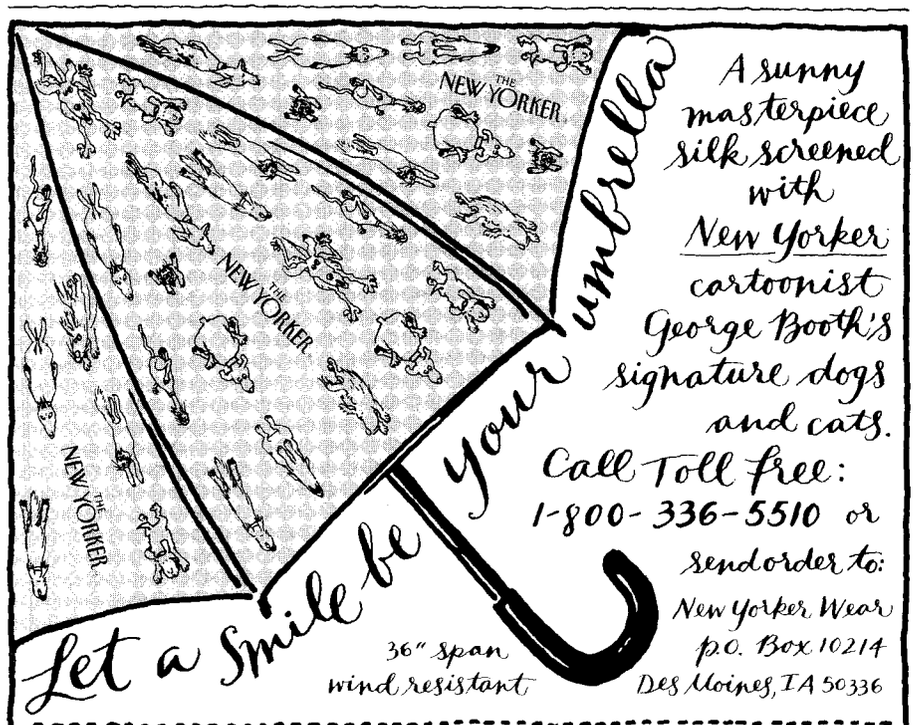

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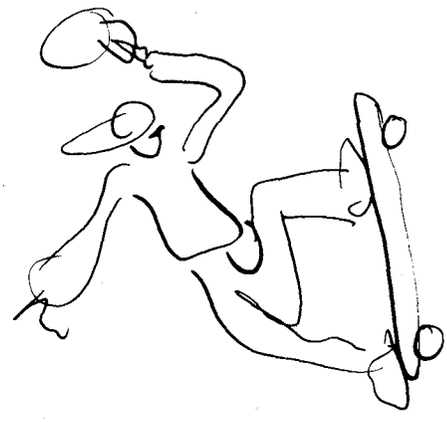
hedged mandate. In recent years, as more blacks have entered Congress from outside the traditional urban-center base, the caucus has become dramatically more diverse, making unanimity rare. For example, Mike Espy (now the Secretary of Agriculture) was elected to Congress from Mississippi with a significant percentage of white votes, and his relatively conservative positions (he was a member of the National Rifle Association, for example) reflected that. Many of the senior members of the Black Caucus hold key committee chairmanships and thus derive their power from the institution, rather than from membership in any group; a Charles Rangel or a Louis Stokes yields to no dictate. "The whole notion of having a caucus position on any one issue is, at best, a tenuous thing, and Mfume has to work through that," Ronald Walters, the chairman of the Political Science Department at Howard University and an unofficial Black Caucus insider, says. The caucus vote on NAFTA was divided, and Mfume has had to work at building consensus positions and imposing the discipline necessary to give meaning to their numbers. In doing so, he has had to overcome the resistance of such Clinton loyalists as Representative John Lewis, of Georgia, a Chief Deputy Majority Whip, and Representative William Jefferson, of Louisiana, both of whom normally oppose any caucus direction that runs counter to the Administration's interest.

Mfume has consciously sought to gain for the caucus (and thus for himself) a public identity in the African-American universe such as was usually reserved for the major civil-rights organizations and their leaders. When the caucus was founded, in 1970, it reflected a black-nationalist ethos, but in the mid-seventies it moved sharply to a more traditional legislative agenda. That "old Black Caucus," as Mfume calls it, was barely known outside Washington, except to the national black élite who attended its annual Legislative Conference, which was considered the premier bash on the African-American social calendar. Mfume has literally taken the caucus outside the Beltway, to conduct conferences in Los Angeles, Chicago, and Miami. "I didn't want to take the organization off the deep end," Mfume says, "but I did want to make it have a greater degree of credibility among the mass of people."

His boldest move in that direction, however, was seen by many as a spectacular leap off the deep end—his announcement of a "sacred covenant" between the caucus and the Nation of Islam's Louis Farrakhan. The incident occurred at last year's Legislative Conference, a five-day affair attended by the civil-rights, show-business, and political black establishment, and by President Clinton as well. It was a showcase moment for Mfume, his first Legislative Conference as chairman, and events dictated high drama. The civil-rights leadership was convulsed with anxiety over Farrakhan, whose Nation of Islam newspaper had been thundering against its members—Jesse Jackson and the executive director of the N.A.A.C.P., Benjamin Chavis, Jr., in particular—for having excluded Farrakhan from the thirtieth-anniversary celebration of Martin Luther King, Jr.,'s march on Washington. The Black Caucus invited Farrakhan and other nontraditional black leaders (including some gang members) to the conference, to participate in various discussions on race relations. The common ground was a perceived need for unity, so that black leaders could attack the problems of violence and drugs and other social malignancies rather than each other. Chavis and Farrakhan patched things up, and, in a gesture meant to insert the caucus into the mixture, Mfume included in his closing address (without having consulted the caucus) a vow to work with all black leaders toward achieving shared goals. "We want the word to go forward today to friend and foe alike that the Congressional Black Caucus, after having entered into a sacred covenant with the N.A.A.C.P. to work for real and meaningful change, will enter into the same covenant with the Nation of Islam—" Mfume intended to continue down a list of other black organizations, but, at the mention of the Nation, enthusiasts stood and cheered wildly, effectively putting an exclamation mark on Mfume's new "covenant" with Farrakhan.



Mfume's remarks, already controversial, became more so when, within weeks, Farrakhan's former "national assistant," Khalid Abdul Muhammad, gave a speech at Kean College, New Jersey, slandering homosexuals, Jews, Catholics, and the Pope. Jewish groups demanded that black leaders, including Mfume, denounce Farrakhan and the Nation, and within the caucus, which relies for some of its funding on key Jewish benefactors, the whole matter stirred up a tempest; some members, including Representative Owens, made clear their feeling that Mfume had no right to freelance in the name of the group. But Mfume stood firm. He never repudiated Farrakhan, and, though he issued a public statement saying that the Black Caucus had no "official" tie to the Nation, he repeated his intention of working with Farrakhan on issues of mutual interest, such as the Nation's stop-the-violence and self-help campaigns. Mfume told me he regrets that the Nation's agenda has been obscured by charges of "alleged" anti-Semitism. "The problem is that the anti-Semitic rhetoric, whether real or imagined, does not allow for the broader message to reach beyond the black community," he said. "Whether real or imagined, it has certainly created a barrier." Mfume knows very well that there is nothing "imagined" about Farrakhan's or Muhammad's incendiary remarks, but he also knows that the connection the Nation of Islam has in the black community, especially among young men, is powerful and in many respects beneficial. In that perspective, for all the outrage prompted inside the Beltway and on the op-ed pages by Mfume's "sacred covenant," the controversy may well be a net plus for the Black Caucus, and, of course, for Mfume.

Mfume says that his other mission as caucus chairman has been to give the group a new identity within Congress,

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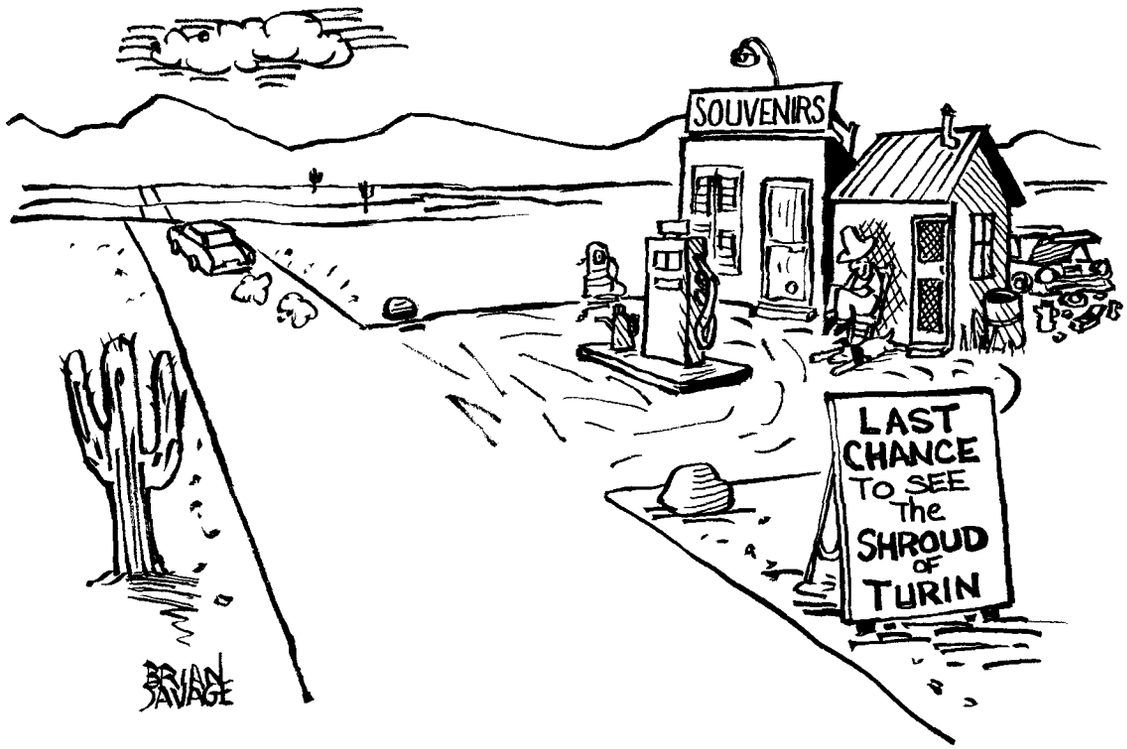

and particularly in the eyes of the Democratic House leadership, which he says has long taken the caucus for granted. "It was a relationship that I thought was akin to feudalism," he says. "I thought that the caucus was like serfs, and that the leadership was the lords. And as long as you did what the lords said, you could stay on their land and you'd be O.K. But the minute you didn't you were in big trouble. You might even get beheaded." When the new Congress convened, Mfume says, he talked to the House Speaker, Thomas Foley, about his expectations for the caucus. "I remember saying to the Speaker, 'This process is not a spectator sport. If I wanted that, I could go to Camden Yards. We don't want to be in box seats, we want to be on the field, in the game, and making the plays. Not that we want to run the team—we just want to be on the field.' And he said, 'Sure, I understand.' " But within only a few weeks the caucus's relationship with the House leadership was put to the test, when Foley tried to deliver to President Clinton the power to exercise a line-item veto—to delete parts of a bill without killing the entire measure—which Democrats had for twelve years denied to Presidents Reagan and Bush. The line-item veto is a sensitive issue for many black representatives, who, as state legislators, saw it exercised by governors in ways that had the effect of hurting the black community. But Foley and the House leadership pushed ahead with the measure without consulting the Black Caucus.

"I said to the Speaker and to others that this is a problem for my members and for me," Mfume says. "It didn't mean anything to them, because, conceptually, it was the *former* Black Caucus." Just minutes before a procedural vote on the measure was to be taken, Mfume called an impromptu caucus meeting in the Speaker's room and said, "If there is ever going to be a defining moment, it has to be now." The members agreed, and Mfume went out to the floor of the House and declared that the Black Caucus would not support the line-item veto—a move that effectively killed its chances. Mfume delights in the memory. "Some of the people around me didn't hear me at first, and people who did started whispering to them, and whoever was in the chair at the time didn't know what to do, and the parliamentarian was saying, 'Hold up, hold up, don't call for the vote.' The Speaker rushed out on the floor. He was a little red-faced, and they huddled there at the well for a long time, and the Speaker immediately wanted to meet with me and with other members of the caucus. So we met, and we said, 'Look, this is not about showboating. And it's certainly not a grandstand. We just can't operate this way. We have real problems with the measure.' And the Speaker said, 'God, if we do this, the Republicans are going to see this as a crack in our ranks, and we have to hang together. This is the wrong issue to make your point on.' But when the Speaker realized that his arguments were not catching hold I think he kind of understood that this was not the old Black Caucus. He didn't know what it was, but he knew that it had changed. So he pulled back, withdrew. He went out on the floor, and they withdrew the rule."

Foley now holds regular monthly meetings with the executive committee of the Black Caucus—except, Mfume says, "for times when we just had too much to do, and thanked him for being ready to see us." In late June, when health-care measures were finally beginning to move through several key committees, Mfume declared that the caucus wanted several features that it considered "nonnegotiable"—including a definable universal coverage. This development occurred at just the moment when the White House and key Democratic congressional leaders seemed ready to soften their position on universal coverage (to the point, Mfume thought, of gutting reform) in the hope of getting some legislation passed. The caucus may yet prove an unexpected complication in the already fragile system of coalitions needed to achieve health-care legislation this year.

As in its dealings with the Democratic leadership, the Black Caucus under Mfume has been insistent upon prior consultation with the White House. Presidents Reagan and Bush could safely ignore the caucus, which was not their constituency. It is Clinton's constituency, however, and the re-

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lationship began unhappily, with the President's decision to hold to the Bush policy on Haiti and, especially, with his bailout on Lani Guinier, which the caucus viewed as an unforgivably craven act. When the White House told reporters after the Guinier-nomination withdrawal that Clinton would be meeting with the Black Caucus to discuss a new nominee, Mfume announced that the caucus would not be there. A second meeting was planned and was also postponed. "I deliberately refused to meet with the President," Mfume says. "There was one, maybe two, who said, 'Well, it's the President. If the President calls, we can't say no.' I said, 'We don't have anything to meet about. Wounds take time to heal. This is a big wound, and we're not going to meet with the President.' I had to say that a couple of times on network television in order to crystallize the fact that we weren't going, and to kind of lock my membership into that position."

The caucus develops its own positions on almost all major issues, not just "black issues," and reporters have got into the habit of attending Mfume's regular press conferences whenever an important new White House initiative is announced—partly because the Black Caucus can be relied upon to disagree with all or part of any given Administration policy. In June, when the White House sent its long-awaited welfare-reform proposal to Congress, Mfume followed the Republicans into the press gallery to criticize it. He said that the caucus could not support welfare reform that took funding away from existing social programs, and blasted the White House for not including the Black Caucus in the formulation of its policy. "It is a mistake that should not continue to be repeated," he said. "This isn't any way to run a railroad."

DURING 1993, the aim of United States policy on Haiti was basically twofold: to restore democracy (and thus Aristide, who had won Haiti's democratic national election with almost seventy per cent of the vote) and to do so in a manner that would last—a considerable undertaking, given Haiti's political culture of corruption and violence. Lawrence Pezzullo, who at the time was Clinton's special envoy to Haiti, and his team called this a "durable scenario," and it depended upon persuading Aristide to agree that, once returned, he would broaden democracy by accepting the idea of government by consensus. That meant giving some voice to his opposition, and Aristide and his followers here rejected that idea, according to Pezzullo. The initial Clinton policy was thus essentially a continuation of the Bush policy—imposing sanctions, turning back refugees, passively supporting the return of Aristide.

On March 18th of this year, the Black Caucus sent a letter to President Clinton that began, "The United States' Haiti policy must be scrapped." The letter was signed by all forty members of the caucus (including the sole Republican—Gary Franks, of Connecticut). Within weeks, Pezzullo was fired, and was replaced by a former chairman of the Black Caucus, William Gray, who was then a representative from Pennsylvania. Before accepting the post, Gray telephoned Mfume and said that he would not accept the position without caucus support. "I reminded him that although he was gone, he was still a member, and this was just like having one of us in that position," Mfume says. Mfume and several other caucus members kept the heat on Clinton through the spring by protesting outside the White House and openly ridiculing the President's foreign-policy acumen. "There's some bad judgment at work in the White House by people who don't understand history," Major Owens said of Clinton's foreign-policy team.

In late May, Dante Caputo, a special United Nations representative to Haiti, wrote a memo to Boutros Boutros-Ghali, the United Nations Secretary-General, outlining his view of American intentions regarding Haiti. On the basis of discussions with Strobe Talbott and other foreign-policy advisers close to President Clinton, Caputo concluded, "The U.S. administration considers that an invasion of Haiti is its best option." The military intervention, Caputo wrote, would return Haiti's ousted President Aristide to power through "a unilateral action, a surgical action, with the eventual participation of several countries in the region so as to give it a certain legitimacy." The diplomat's assessment of American policy mirrored Kweisi Mfume's recommendation that the United States consider "surgical air strikes to at least send a message to the military."

According to notes from a meeting attended by Caputo and the Secretary-General, the Clinton Administration's recent decision to abandon efforts to force Aristide into a consensus mode and to end negotiations with the Haitian military "acted as a brake to a diplomatic solution, creating a situation where the intervention became nearly inevitable." The new Clinton Haiti policy halted the summary turning back of refugees, sought safe havens for them, drastically tightened sanctions, and stopped commercial air traffic to and from Haiti—all actions urged by the Black Caucus.

With invasion, if it comes, the will of the caucus will have been done. What happens then? In his letter Major Owens assured Clinton that intervention would last only "a few months" and that "human casualties" would "be negligible." Pezzullo, who is openly bitter about these developments, says that intervention "would be a disaster," explaining, "You have no institutions, you have nothing resembling solid ground you can put your feet on. . . . The Black Caucus is going to pay a terrible price here. . . . They have assumed completely the Aristide line. They're not even questioning it. And they're pressuring their own government to pursue the Aristide line, and, indeed, their government is pursuing the Aristide line. . . . But, you see, the problem is, this will not work. If we invade—which is very likely, not because the President will have the stomach for it but because he's going to find himself with no option but to invade—then the costs will come."

An underlying doubt about the viability of an invasion resides in Aristide himself. His class-war rhetoric and alleged condoning of violence (including the practice of "necklacing," by which victims are bound inside gasoline-soaked tires and burned alive) has suggested to some observers that he may not be the romantic democratic figure his reputation in exile holds him to be,

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and that his return will not resolve Haiti's instability.

Mfume discounts these concerns. He has met often with Aristide, he says, and during the exiled leader's time in America he has learned moderation toward his opposition. "He has been tempered, in the last couple of years following the coup, with a greater realization that democracy must be broad enough to tolerate dissent, and at the same time be careful enough in guarding against something such as an overthrow," Mfume told me.

MFUME'S House seat is safe, but he is probably several years away from the chairmanship of a standing committee, and it is by no means certain that his caucus tenure has enhanced his chances for a place in the Party leadership. On the contrary, when Speaker Foley chose the Democrats' four deputy whips, the slot more or less reserved for a black member went to John Lewis, who entered Congress with Mfume. A Senate run is unlikely soon, because both Maryland senators are Democrats. Still, it is difficult to imagine Mfume, accustomed now to the light, returning comfortably to the relative obscurity of a middle-level congressman. His ambition runs deep and swift; family and friends say that he covets a higher station in Congress and that he has discussed an eventual try for the Speakership, or perhaps statewide office.

As it has turned out, Mfume guessed right about the role the Black Caucus would hold in this congressional term under this President. By the end of last week, the caucus was holding emergency meetings on the racial-justice provision of the crime bill with Attorney General Janet Reno and the White House chief of staff, Leon Panetta, in the hope of getting what Mfume called "a win" for the caucus despite Clinton's reluctance. The matter of a Haitian invasion, meanwhile, seemed increasingly a question of "when" rather than "if." When Mfume was asked what United States military intervention to restore Aristide would say about the caucus, he replied, "It will say that the new Congressional Black Caucus is now able to effectuate change in both domestic *and* foreign policy." And that may be the ultimate verification of Mfume's new arithmetic. ♦

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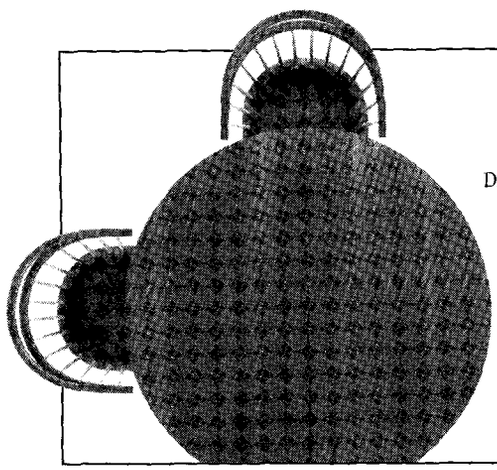
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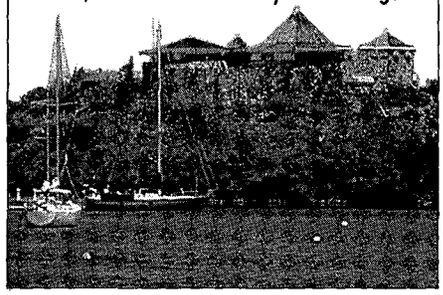

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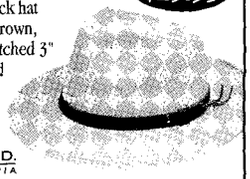
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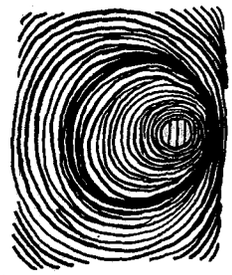
PERSONAL HISTORY

FATHER STORIES

Six years after his son was convicted of murder and sentenced to life imprisonment, a father addresses the paradox of time, the bars that separate and connect all fathers and sons.

BY JOHN EDGAR WIDEMAN



NE day neither in the past nor in the future, and not at this moment, either, all the people gathered on a high ridge that overlooked the rolling plain of earth, its forests, deserts, rivers unscrolling below them like a painting on parchment. Then the people began speaking, one by one, telling the story of a life—everything seen, heard, and felt by each soul. As the voices dreamed, a vast, bluish mist enveloped the land and the seas below. Nothing was visible. It was as if the solid earth had evaporated. Now there was nothing but the voices and the stories and the mist; and the people were afraid to stop the storytelling and afraid not to stop, because no one knew where the earth had gone.

Finally, when only a few storytellers remained to take a turn, someone shouted: Stop! Enough, enough of this talk! Enough of us have spoken! We must find the earth again!

Suddenly, the mist cleared. Below the people, the earth had changed. It had grown into the shape of the stories they'd told—a shape as wondrous and new and real as the words they'd spoken. But it was also a world unfinished, because not all the stories had been told.

Some say that death and evil entered the world because some of the people had no chance to speak. Some say that the world would be worse than it is if all the stories had been told. Some say that there are no more stories to tell. Some believe that untold stories are the only ones of value and we are lost when they are lost. Some are certain that the storytelling never stops; and this is one more story, and the earth always lies under its blanket of mist being born.

I BEGIN again because I don't want it to end. I mean all these father stories that take us back, that bring us here, where you are, where I am, needing to make sense, to go on if we can and should.

Once, when you were five or six, all the keys to the camp vehicles disappeared. Keys for trucks, vans, rental cars, a school bus, a tractor, boats—the whole fleet necessary each summer to service the business of offering four hundred boys an eight-week escape in the Maine woods. In the innocence of the oasis that your grandfather had created—this gift of water, trees, a world apart—nobody bothered to lock things; keys were routinely left in the ignition for the next driver. Then, one day, the keys were gone. For hours, everybody searched high and low. I thought of you as I climbed into the cab of the dump truck to check for a key that might have fallen to the floor or slipped into some crevice or corner of the raw, gasoline-reeking interior. You because countless times I'd hoisted you into the cab, tucked you in the driver's seat. Nothing you enjoyed more than turning a steering wheel, roaring and vrooming engine noise while you whipped the wheel back and forth, negotiating some endless, dramatic highway only you could see. You were fascinated by that imaginary road and the wheels that rolled you there. Even before you could talk, you'd flip your toy trucks and cars on their sides or upside down so you could spin the wheels, growl motor noise.

You never admitted taking the keys, and nobody pressed you very hard after they were found, in a heap in the sand under the boat dock. But, years later, Junie, the head caretaker, mentioned that he'd seen you making your usual early-morning rounds from vehicle to vehicle the day the keys were missing, and confided to me a suspicion he had felt then but had kept to himself till you were gone and were unlikely to return for a long time. Turns out your grandfather had been suspicious, too. He didn't miss much that happened in the camp, either, and had observed what Junie had observed. I recall being rather annoyed when your grandfather suggested

FILIP PAGOWSKI

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that I ask you if you might have noticed keys anywhere the day they disappeared. Annoyed and amazed, because you were hardly more than a baby. No reason for you to bother the keys. I'd instructed you never to touch them, and that was one of the conditions you'd promised to honor in return for the privilege of installing yourself behind steering wheels. I trusted you. Questioning my trust insulted us both. Besides, the missing keys implied a plot, a prank, sabotage, some scheme premeditated and methodically perpetrated by older campers or adults, and you were just a kid. You were my son. His grandson. So he gently hinted I might casually check with you, not because you were a suspect but because you had access and had been noticed at the scene, and so perhaps might be able to assist the searchers with a clue.

I don't remember your grandfather's ever mentioning the keys again until we'd lost you and all of us were searching once more for answers. And, since each of us had then begun to understand that answers were not around us, not in the air, and not exclusively in you, but inside us all, when your grandfather repeated ten years later his suspicions about the keys, it sounded almost like a confession, and we both understood that some searches never end.

A small army of adults, stymied, frustrated, turning the camp inside out. A couple of hours of mass confusion, pockets, drawers, memories rifled, conspiracy theories floated, paranoia blossoming, numb searches and re-searches. Minor panic when duplicate keys weren't stashed where they should be; righteous indignation and scapegoating; the buzz, the edge for weeks afterward whenever keys were mentioned, picked up, or set down in the camp office. The morning of the lost keys became one of those incidents, significant or not in themselves, that lend a name, a tone to a whole camp season: the summer of baby goats in the nature lodge, the hurricane summer, the summer a boy was lost for a night on Mt. Katahdin, the summer you-remember-who bit your grandfather's finger, the summer two counsellors from a boys' camp nearby were killed in a high-speed crash late at night, the summer the Israeli nurses swam topless, the summer you left and never returned.

If you'd ambled up on your short, chunky legs and handed me the lost keys, it wouldn't have convinced me you'd taken them. Nor would a confession have

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convinced me. Nothing you might have said or done could have solved the mystery of the keys. No accident or coincidence would have implicated you. Without a reason, with no motive, no *why*, the idea of your removing the keys remained unthinkable.

You were blond then. Huge brown eyes. Hair on your head of many kinds, a storm, a multiculture of textures: kinky, dead straight, curly, frizzy, ringlets; hair thick in places, sparse in others. All your people, on both sides of the family, ecumenically represented in the golden crown atop your head.

You cried huge tears, too. Heartbreaking, slow, sliding tears that formed gradually in the corners of your dark eyes—gleaming, shapely tears before they collapsed and inched down your cheeks. Big tears, but you cried quietly, almost privately, even though the proof of your unhappiness was smearing your face. Then again, when you needed to, you could bellow and hoot—honking Coltrane explorations of anger, temper, outrage. Most of the time, however, you cried softly, your sobs pinched off by deep, heaving sighs, with a rare, high-pitched, keening wail escaping in spite of whatever was disciplining you to wrap your sorrow so close to yourself.

I'M remembering things in no order, with no plan. These father stories. Because that's all they are.

Your mother said that the story she wishes she could write, but knows is so painful she hesitates to tell it to herself, would be about her, of course, and you, yes, but also about her father, your grandfather: what he built, who he was, his long, special life, how many other lives he touched, the place he created out of nothing, in the woods, along the lake that I'm watching this morning, and that watches me as I write.

It is her father she has returned to all these summers in Maine. What he provided, no strings attached. His gift of water, trees, weather, a world apart, full of surprise, a world unchanging. Summers in Maine were the stable, rooted part of her.

ONE morning, as I sit on the dock staring at the lake, a man and a boy float past in a small boat. They have turned off the putt-putt outboard motor hanging over the stern and are drifting in closer to the rocky shoreline, casting their fishing lines where the water is blackish green from shadows of tall pines lining the lake. A wake spreads languidly behind the boat, one wing plowing the dark water, its twin unfurling like a bright flag dragged across the surface. No sound except birdsong, the hiss of a fishing line arcing away from the boat, then its plopping like a coin in the bottom of a well. The weather has changed overnight. Wind from the west this morning—a cooling, drying wind lifting the mist before dawn, turning the sky unwaveringly blue at this early hour. A wind shunting away last week's mugginess and humidity, though it barely ruffles the skin of the water in this inlet. Gray bands of different shades and textures stripe the lake's center, panels of a fan lazily unfolding, closing, opening. Later, the west wind will perk up and bring chill gusts, stir a chop into the water. Smooth and quiet now for the man and the boy hunkered down in their boat. They wear baseball caps, layers of shirts and jackets, the same bulky shape twice; one form is larger than the other, and each is a slightly different color, but otherwise the two are identical, down to the way their wrists snap, their lines arc up and away from the boat. The man's lure lands farther away than the boy's each time, in scale with the hunched figures drifting past in the boat.

I will see the boat again, about an hour later, when the water is louder, when ripples driven from the west are forming scalloped waves. The boy, alone then, whips the boat full throttle in tight, spray-sluicing circles, around and around, gouging deep furrows. The nose of the boat high in the air, he hunches over the screaming engine, gunning it in short, sprinting bursts, then in sharp turns, around and around, as if he were trying to escape a swarm of hornets.

The wind is forgetting it's July. I wish for extra insulation under my hooded sweatshirt and nylon windbreaker. Trees are a baffle for the wind and conjure its sound into colder, stronger, arctic messages shuttling through the upper atmosphere. In the same way, your mother's hair when it's long and loose, catching all the colors of light, falling down around her bare shoulders, carries within itself that wind rush of surf crashing far away, the muffled roar of a crowd in a vast, distant stadium.

You'd twist thick clumps of her chestnut hair in your fist, clutch it while she held you and you sucked the thumb of your other hand. For hours. For hours if she'd let you.

Maybe all things happen, including ourselves, long before we see, hear, know they are happening. Memory, then, isn't so much archival as it is a seeking of vitality, harmony, an evocation of a truer, more nearly complete present tense. All of this, of course, relates to personality—the construction of a continuous narrative of self. Our stories. Father stories.

DO you remember your fear of leaves? Of course you do. The teasers in our family would never let you forget.

Once, in Laramie, Wyoming, after dinner, just as a full-moon night was falling and the wide, straight-arrow streets were as empty and still as Long Lake at dawn, I was riding you on my shoulders—a rare moment, the two of us together, away from your mother and brother—when, suddenly, you cried out. The street we were on had a ceiling. Branches from trees planted in people's yards hung over fences lining the sidewalk, forming a canopy overhead. I panicked. Thought I'd knocked you against a low branch or you'd got your hair tangled—or, worse, been scratched in the eye or the face. Your fingers dug into my scalp. You didn't want to let go as I tried to unseat you from my shoulders, slide you down into the light from a street lamp to see what was the matter.

You'd given me a couple of good yanks, so I was both mad and scared when I finally pulled you down, cradling you in my arms to get a clear look at your face.

No tears. No visible damage. Yet you were wild-eyed, trembling uncontrollably. The leaves had been after you. Probably not touching you but, worse, a blanket of quivering, rustling, mottled dread suddenly hovering above you. Surrounding you, rendering you speechless. Terrorized beyond words or tears, you'd gripped my hair and kicked my chest. I'd thought you were roughing me up because you wanted to play. Grabbed your wrists and squeezed them tight to hold you as I galloped down the quiet Laramie street, doing my best imitation of the bucking bronco on Wyoming license plates. You were rendered even more helpless with your hands

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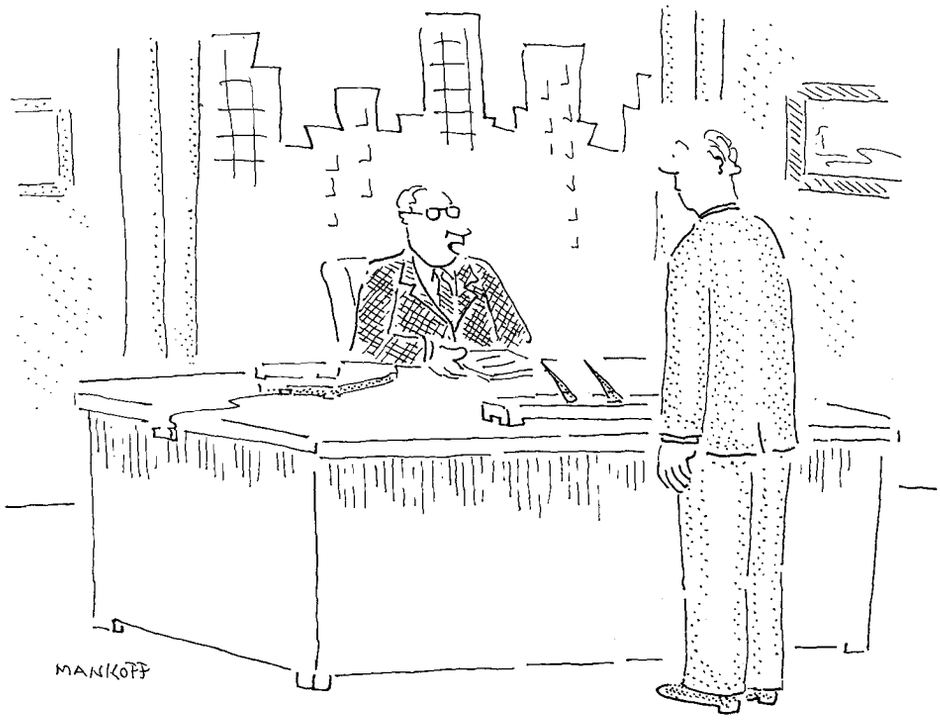
clamped in mine, struggling to free yourself while I thought we were having fun. Your father snorting and braying, jiggedy-jig, jiggedy-jig, suddenly in league with your worst enemy, and nowhere to run, nowhere to hide—he was rushing you to your doom. No wonder your fingers tried to rip my hair out when I released your wrists. Holding on, reining me in, pounding on my skull, fighting back the only way you knew how, short of pitching yourself down from a dizzying height, down, down to the pavement, itself strewn with shadowy leaves.

When I was a kid, I harbored a morbid fear of feathers. Feathers. Not a single feather or a few loose feathers, like the ones I'd stick in my naps to play Indian, but feathers in a bunch, attached to birds who could wriggle them, flutter them, transform them into loose flesh, rotting, molting, the unnatural sign of death-in-life and life-in-death, the zombie, mummy, decaying corpses of movies and my nightmares. Feathers a kind of squirmy skin hanging off the bone, all the more horrible because feathers seemed both dry and sticky with blood.

My feathers, your leaves. One afternoon at the Belmar on Homewood Avenue, in Pittsburgh, in one of those Bible-days epic movies, a man was tortured nearly to death, his bloody body flung off a fortress wall. He landed on a heap of corpses in a ditch. As the camera pans the mangled bodies, the sound of huge wings beating thumps through the Belmar's crackly speakers. After the Technicolor glare of carnage under a desert sun, the camera is blinded an instant by the black swoop of vultures. They land atop the corpses, feathers rippling, glinting as the birds begin their slow-motion, ponderously delicate lope toward the choicest morsels of meat—eyeballs, tongues, exposed guts—toward the not-quite-dead-yet man sprawled on a bed of other victims.

Then a closeup of the man's face. As he spots the vultures and screams, I scream. I know I did. Even though I couldn't hear myself, because everybody in the Belmar joined in one shrieking whoop of fear and disgust. And I never forgot the scene. Never. Never forgot, never forgave. Hated pigeons. They became my scapegoats, or scapebirds. I'd hurt them any chance I got. Trapped one in a box and tormented it. Fully intended to incinerate the crippled one who wound up on the stone steps in the hallway of my dorm freshman year until my roommate shamed me out of it when I asked to borrow his lighter and some fluid and he demanded to know for what.



"Hewes, it's come to my attention that you've been using our Internet access to troll for babes."

• •

Pigeons were brown and dirty. They shat everywhere. Spoiled things. Their cooing from the eaves of our roof on Finance Street could startle you awake. They sneaked around, hid in dark corners, carried disease, like rats. Far too many of the useless creatures. I focussed my fear and hate of feathers on them. Went out of my way to cause them difficulties.

Once, I was so angry at your mother's pain I thought I was angry at her. She was sharing out loud for the first time how torn apart she'd felt that summer you never came back. How she feared her father's gift had been blighted forever. Woods, lake, sky a mirror reflecting absence of father, absence of son, the presence of her grief.

I couldn't deal with the pain in her voice, so I made up another story. Presumed to tell her she was letting her pain exclude other ways of trying to make sense, with words, with stories, with the facts as given and the facts as felt, make sense of the enormity of what happens and doesn't happen, the glimmers of it we paste together trying to find peace. One different story would be the day she meets her father again in this place and what he might have to say to her and why he needed to see her and what he might remind her of and why it would need to be here, on a path through the thick pine woods where light can surprise you, penetrating in smoky shafts where it has no business being, where it sparkles, then shifts instantly, gone faster than the noises of creatures in the underbrush you never see. I make up her father, as I'm making up mine. Her father appearing to her in a suit of lights because that, too, could transpire, could redeem, could set us straight in a world where you never know what's going to happen next and often what happens is bad, is crushing, but it's never the worst thing, never the best, it's only the last thing, and not even exactly that, except once, and even then death is not exactly the last thing that happens, because you never know what's going to happen next. For better or worse, cursed and blessed by this ignorance, we invent, fill it, are born with the gift, the need, the weight of filling it with our imaginings. That are somehow as real as we are. Our mothers and fathers and children. Our stories.

I HOPE this is not a hard day for you. I hope you can muster peace within yourself and deal with the memories, the

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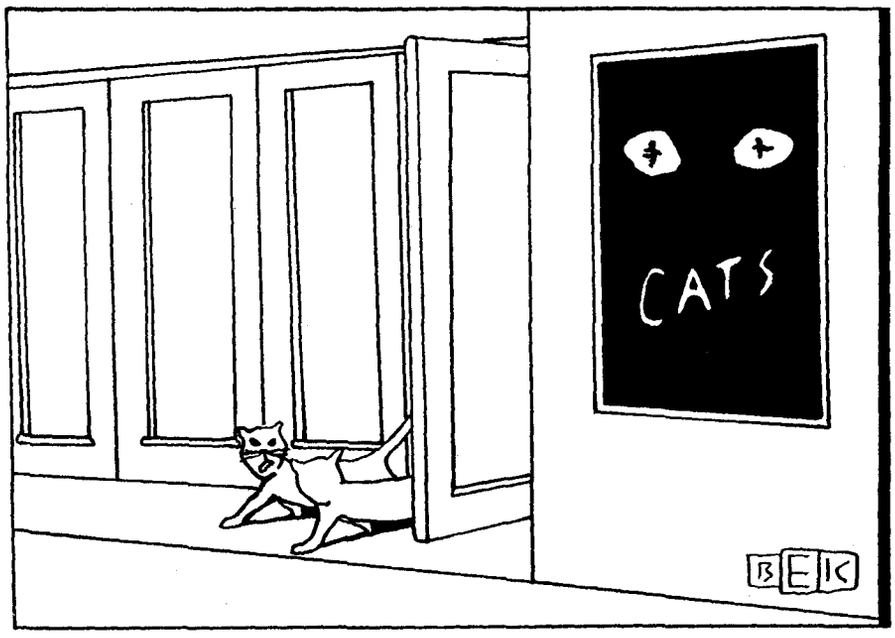
horrors of the past eight years. It must strike you as strange—as strange as it strikes me—that eight years have passed already. I remember a few days after hearing you were missing and a boy was found dead in the room the two of you had been sharing, I remember walking down toward the lake to be alone, because I felt myself coming apart: the mask I'd been wearing, as much for myself as for the benefit of other people, was beginning to splinter. I could hear ice cracking, great rents and seams breaking my face into pieces, carrying away chunks of numb flesh. I found myself on my knees, praying to a tree. In the middle of some absurdly compelling ritual that I'd forgotten I carried the memory of. Yet there I was on my knees, digging my fingers into the loose soil, grabbing up handfuls, sinking my face into the clawed earth as if it might heal me. Speaking to the roots of a pine tree as if its shaft might carry my message up to the sky, send it on its way to wherever I thought my anguish should be addressed.

I was praying to join you. Offering myself in exchange for you. Take me. Take me. Free my son from the terrible things happening to him. Take me in his place. Let them happen to me. I was afraid you were dying or already dead or suffering unspeakable tortures at the hands of a demon kidnapper. The tears I'd held back were flowing finally, a flood that brought none of the relief I must have believed that hoarding them would earn me when I let go at last. Just wetness burning, clouding my eyes. I couldn't will the spirit out of my body into the high branches of that tree. What felt familiar, felt like prayers beside my bed as a child, or church people moaning in the amen corner, or my mother weeping and whispering *hold on, hold on* to herself as she rocks side to side and mourns, or some naked priest chanting and climbing toward the light on a bloody ladder inside his chest—these memories of what might have been visions of holiness could not change the simple facts. I was a man who had most likely lost his son, and hugging trees and burying his face in dirt and crying for help till breath slunk out of his body wouldn't change a thing.

A desperate, private moment, one of thousands I could force myself to dredge up if I believed it might serve some purpose. I share that one example with you to say that the eight years have not passed quickly. The years are countless moments, many as intense as this one I'm describing to you, moments I conceal from myself as I've hidden them from other people. Other moments, also countless, when terrible things had to be shared, spoken aloud, in phone calls with lawyers, depositions, interviews, conferences, in the endless conversations with your mother. Literally endless, because often the other business of our lives would seem merely a digression from the dialogue with you, about you. A love story finally, love of you, your brother and sister, since no word except love makes sense of the ever-present narrative our days unfold.



"It was so depressing. When I go to the theatre, I want to be entertained."

Time can drag like a long string, studded and barbed, through a fresh wound, so it hasn't gone quickly. The moment-to-moment, day-by-day struggles imprint my flesh. But the eight years are also a miracle, a blink of the eye through which I watch myself wending my way from there to here. In this vast house of our fathers and mothers.

YOUR mother didn't need my words or images to work out her grief. She needed time. Took the time she needed to slowly, gradually, painstakingly unravel feelings knotted in what seemed for a while a hopeless tangle. No choice, really. She's who she is. Can give nothing less than her whole heart to you, to this place, inseparable from all our lives, that her father, your grandfather, provided.

For a while, I guess it must have felt impossible. And still can, I know. She may have doubted her strength, her capacity to give enough, give everything, because everything seemed to be tearing her apart, breaking her down. She needed time. Not healing time, exactly, since certain wounds never heal, but time to change and more time to learn to believe, to understand she could go on, was going on, for better or worse. She could be someone she'd never dreamed she could be. Her heart strong, whole, even as it cracks and each bit demands everything.

THE fullness of time. The fullness of time. That phrase has haunted me since I first heard it or read it, though I don't know when or how the words entered my awareness, because they seem to have always been there, like certain melodies, for instance, or visual harmonies of line in your mother's body that I wondered how I'd ever lived without the first time I encountered them, although another recognition clicked in almost simultaneously, reminding me that I'd been waiting for those particular notes, those lines, a very long time. They'd been forming me before I formed my first impressions of them.

The fullness of time. Neither forward nor backward. A space capacious enough to contain your coming into and going out of the world, your consciousness of these events, the wrap of oblivion bedding them. A life, the passage of a life: the truest understanding, measure, experience of time's fullness. So many lives, and each different, each unknowable, no matter

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how similar to yours, your flesh and not your flesh, lives passing, like yours, into the fullness of time, where each of these lives and all of them together make no larger ripple than yours, all and each abiding in the unruffled innocence of the fullness that is time. All the things that mattered so much to you or them sinking into a dreadful, unfeatured equality that is also rest and peace, time gone: but more, always more, the hands writing, the hands snatching, hands becoming bones, then dust, then whatever comes next, what time takes and fashions of you after the possibilities, permutations, and combinations—the fullness in you—are exhausted, played out for the particular shape the fullness has assumed for a time in you, for you. You are never it but what it could be, then is not: you not lost but ventured, gained, stretched, more, until the dust is particles and the particles play unhindered, unbound, returned to the fullness of time.

I KNOW my father's name, Edgar, and some of his fathers' names, Hannibal, Tatum, Jordan, but I can't go back any further than a certain point, except that I also know the name of a place, Greenwood, South Carolina, and an even smaller community, Promised Land, nearly abutting Greenwood, where my grandfather, who, of course, is your great-grandfather, was born, and where many of his brothers are buried, under sturdy tombstones bearing his name, our name, "Wideman," carved in stone in the place where the origins of the family name begin to dissolve into the loam of plantations owned by white men, where my grandfathers' identities dissolve, where they were boys, then men, and the men they were fade into a set of facts, sparse, ambiguous, impersonal, their intimate lives unretrievable, where what is known about a county, a region, a country and its practice of human bondage, its tradition of obscuring, stealing, or distorting black people's lives, begins to crowd out the possibility of seeing my ancestors as human beings. The powers and principalities that originally restricted our access to the life that free people naturally enjoy still rise like a shadow, a wall between my grandfathers and me, my father and me, between the two of us, father and son, son and father.

So we must speak these stories to one another.

Love. ♦

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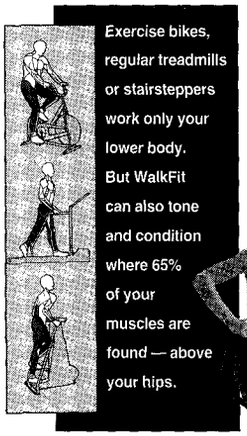

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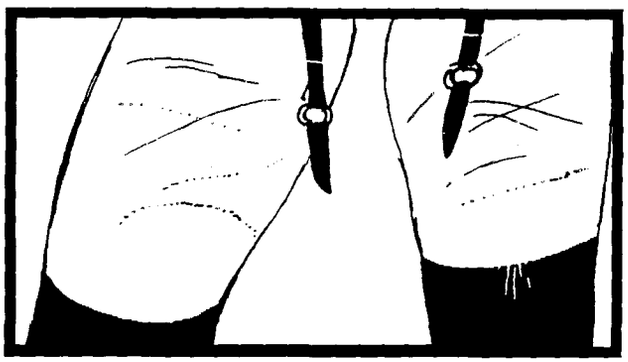
LIFE AND LETTERS

THE UNMASKING OF O

It's been forty years since the publication of "Story of O"—the sexual landmark that became one of the most widely read French novels. But, until now, the author's true identity has been shrouded in a literary mystery.

BY JOHN DE ST. JORRE



In June of 1954, a rather beautiful book with a strange title was published in Paris. Called simply "Histoire d'O," it was an explicitly erotic novel, remarkably frank in its language and imagery, and its author's identity was concealed by a pen name, Pauline Réage. At the moment it appeared, it was overshadowed by Françoise Sagan's much more innocent tale of sexual love, "Bonjour Tristesse," which won the triple crown of French publishing that year—critical acclaim, a scandalous reputation, and huge sales. But over time, "Story of O" began to emerge as an intriguing combination of succès de scandale and succès d'estime. Quite apart from its explicit sexual content—which was deemed both shocking and unmistakably literary—the slender volume was distinguished by a laudatory preface written by Jean Paulhan, then one of France's most deeply respected literary figures. The prose style and the preface were closely examined, as readers and the Parisian world of letters sought to discern the true identity of the author.

"Story of O" relates the experiences of a young Paris fashion photographer, a woman called O, who is taken to a château in Roissy, a Paris suburb, by René, her lover. During her stay, she is systematically turned into a slave through regular whippings, sexual assaults by a number of men, long hours chained up in dungeon-like rooms, and the insertion of progressively larger ebonite shafts in her anus to enable it to accommodate better the predatory phalluses of her masters. All this is done with her consent, for her love of René.

After a time, René hands O over to a family friend, a cold, gray-eyed Englishman called Sir Stephen. The saga of brutality, humiliation, and submission intensifies. O is branded on her buttocks, and rings bearing her name and Sir Stephen's are fitted through her labia. O also indulges her taste for women, both enjoying the act of seduction and working as an accomplice of René and Sir Stephen to provide new recruits for the château.

The final humiliation comes at a party when an owl mask is put over O's head and a chain is attached to one of the rings in her labia. She becomes a human cipher at the disposal of any man—or woman—who desires her.

The novel, elegantly written in a cool, matter-of-fact style, lingers over O's inner feelings, her clothes and toilet, the architecture and interior decoration of the places where she stays, and the sensual details of her couplings with other women. Religious references abound, and the story is permeated with mystical and sacrificial imagery. These provide an unsettling counterpoint to the clinical description of O's remorseless degradation.

During the last four decades, "Story of O" has never been out of print. For a period in the sixties, it was the best-selling and most widely read contemporary French novel outside France. It has been translated into two dozen languages, has sold millions of copies, and has been turned into a film. Moreover, the book has established itself as a literary landmark—a seminal work of erotica, which expanded public acceptance of what could be published and which hoisted a beacon for a new genre. "Story of O" has also been attacked by feminists, who have viewed it as an act of treachery by a woman writer pandering to male fantasies; at various times, copies of the book have been publicly burned. These critics decry, among other things, the passages that deal with O's acquiescence in physical violence. At one point, Sir Stephen says, "I'm going to put a gag in your mouth, O, because I'd like to whip you till I draw blood. Do I have your permission?" "I'm yours," O replies.

"Story of O" soon came under the scrutiny of the French government's equivalent of a vice squad—known popularly as the Brigade Mondaine, or Worldly Brigade. Jean-Jacques Pauvert, an avant-garde publisher, who published the novel in French, and Maurice Girodias, whose Olympia Press brought it out in English weeks later, were summoned to police headquarters and interrogated. Jean Paulhan, thanks to his flattering preface, found himself taking the heat for the author and, at the same time, explaining that he did not know who that author might be. Ever since, speculation concerning the author's identity has centered mostly on

The illustrations in this piece are from a comic-book adaptation of "Story of O" by Guido Crepax, published by Jean-Jacques Pauvert in 1975. Grove Press published the first English-language edition in 1978.

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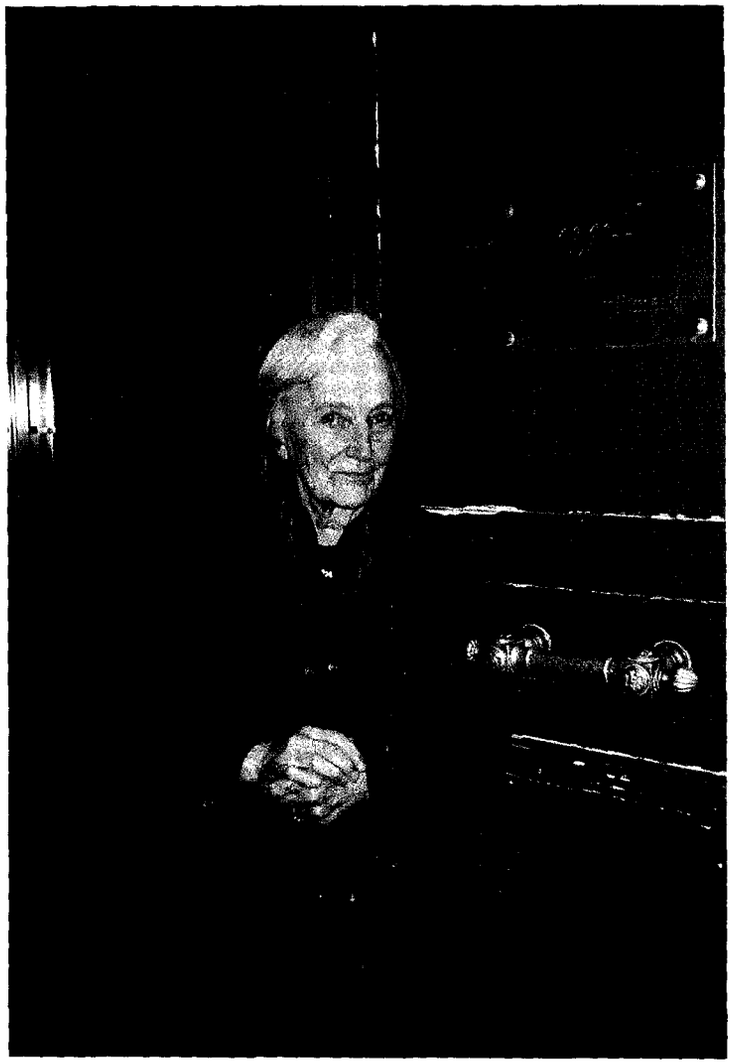
male candidates, among them André Malraux, Henry de Montherlant, André Pieyre de Mandiargues, Raymond Queneau, Jean Paulhan himself, and even an American, George Plimpton. ("It wasn't me," Plimpton said recently, with a laugh, "but it's a rumor I prefer not to scotch.")

In Paris and among international bibliophiles, there has long been informed speculation, but conclusive proof has been lacking; doubts have remained. A few knowledgeable people believed that there was probably more than one author, and Paulhan, as the book's editor and the writer of its preface, was always a prime suspect.

A small inner circle, including family members and the Paris publishers of the book, knew the identity of the author all along, but its members proved remarkably loyal over the years in refusing to reveal it. It is of particular interest that Paulhan never divulged the truth publicly, for he was, in fact, the central cause of the mystery: "Story of O" was written expressly for him by a woman who feared that he might end their long affair. It was a book he described as "the most ardent love letter any man has ever received."



The author, now eighty-six, originally intended for only one man to read "Story of O." He described it as "the most ardent love letter any man has ever received."

JOHN DE ST. JORRE

THE name of the French Scheherazade who wove her strange and compelling story night after night to save her relationship with the man she loved is Dominique Aury. Now eighty-six years old, she has been a journalist, an editor, a translator, a member of several literary-prize committees, and a prizewinner herself, and was awarded the Légion d'Honneur; in short, she is a highly skilled and much respected woman of letters. Jean Paulhan, her now long-dead lover, was a writer, a critic, and an editor, and one of France's intellectual "immortals," which is to say a member of the Académie Française. Paulhan's preëminence in France as a literary critic was akin to that of such contemporaries as Edmund Wilson in the United States and Cyril Connolly in Britain.

The love affair between these two literary figures spanned three decades, during war and peace, occupation and liberation, and through Paulhan's long second marriage. His wife became increasingly immobilized by Parkinson's disease, and he never considered divorce; she survived him. Conducted in conditions of semi-clandestinity, the affair was marked by moments of great passion and periods of great anguish, and it produced an unusual progeny: the first explicitly erotic novel to be written by a woman and published in the modern era. Until now, however, Aury's only concession to public curiosity has been to write a disguised introduction to the sequel to the original novel, which was published in 1969, and to grant two printed interviews when the film version of the book was made, in France, in 1974. She refused to be photographed and insisted on preserving her anonymity by referring to herself only by her pen name. Her customary reply to those—the police included—who asked directly whether she was the author of "Story of O" was always the same: "That is a question to which I never respond." She wrote "Story of O" for an audience of one; she had never written anything like it before. She was in her mid-forties at the time, and Paulhan was almost seventy. It was both a private document of their passion and *une entreprise de séduction*, designed to ensnare—her word—a highly sophisticated man. "What could I do?" she said to me as we sat talking one recent afternoon. "I couldn't paint, I couldn't write poetry. What could I do to make him sit up?"

Aury is a small, neat, handsome woman with gray hair and gray-blue eyes. On the day I visited her, she was wearing a navy-blue dress with a matching cardigan and a blue cravat that had a discreet red stripe running through it. She wore no makeup, and her only jewelry was a heavy gold ring in the shape of a scarab, on her wedding finger. Smooth, firm hands and open sandals enhanced a suggestion of youth. Her voice was vibrant and her eyes were clear as she spoke of how she wrote "Story of O" as an extended love letter to Paulhan, who, she feared, was going to abandon her. "I wasn't young, I wasn't pretty, it was necessary to find other weapons. The physical side wasn't enough. The weapons, alas, were in the head. 'I'm sure you can't do that sort of thing,' he said. 'You think not?' I said. 'Well, I can try.' "

"Story of O" had the desired effect. Paulhan loved it from the opening sentence and urged her on. When it was finished, he asked her to let him find a publisher. She agreed on the condition that she remain

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anonymous, and she chose her pseudonym from a variety of sources. The name Pauline, she told me, derived from two famous women—Pauline Borghese, of Renaissance Italy, and Pauline Roland, a celebrated socialist and champion of women's rights in late-nineteenth-century France. No, she said, the choice of Pauline had had nothing to do with Paulhan; she realized only later that many people might think there was a connection. The name Réage was drawn randomly from a real-estate registry in the French countryside, south of Paris, where her father had once had a house.

I had first approached Aury while I was doing research for a book, "The Good Ship Venus," which focusses on the novels published by the Olympia Press in Paris in the nineteen-fifties. I was in for a double surprise. First, she agreed to be interviewed speaking as Dominique Aury. Second, it turned out that she wore more than one veil: the name Dominique Aury was itself a disguise. The calm, clearheaded woman who answered my questions easily and with dry humor has yet another identity, that of her given name, which she discarded during the Second World War. She asked me not to publish it, or the details of her surviving family, and this I agreed to. That reservation aside, she said, she was at last ready to tell the full story behind "Story of O."

DOMINIQUE AURY'S family was originally from Brittany. Her paternal grandfather, after fighting in the Franco-Prussian War, moved to England with his wife, sister, and brother-in-law, and the family worked in French restaurants there. Her father was born in London and spent the first fifteen years of his life in the cosmopolitan Soho district. He was bilingual and had dual nationality, and when the family finally returned to France, in the early years of this century, he became an English teacher. He married, and Dominique, his only child, was born in 1907. Her mother decided that she did not want to bring her up, and gave the newborn infant to her mother-in-law. Dominique grew up as a solitary child in her grandmother's house in the country and developed a passion for books; she read French and English equally well.

She obtained a diploma to teach English but never used it. Instead, she went into journalism and began translating English newsstories into French. She worked for literary magazines during the war and joined Gallimard, the French publisher, in 1950. She has remained with Gallimard ever since and still comes in from her home, in the suburbs, three times a week, driving fast through the Paris traffic in her car, a small Peugeot. Besides translating, she sits on a readers' committee that chooses new titles to be published, and copy-edits manuscripts.

Dominique Aury first met Jean Paulhan in the early part of the war. It was, appropriately, a love of literature that brought them together. She was in her early thirties, single, and unknown, working as a journalist and helping to distribute a clandestine newspaper called *Lettres Françaises*. (It was around this time that she assumed the name Dominique Aury, choosing Dominique because, being an equally common name in France for a man or a woman, it had the advantage of obfuscation, and Aury because it derived from her mother's maiden name.) Paulhan was in his early fifties. His first marriage, which produced two sons, had ended in divorce a decade earlier, and he was married to a woman named Germaine Dauptain, who had a daughter and a son by a previous marriage. Already well established as one of France's leading intellectuals, Paulhan was an important editor at Gallimard and had been editor of the *Nouvelle Revue Française*, the country's most distinguished literary magazine, from 1925 until the German occupation of France temporarily stopped its publication.

Aury had been working on a collection of French religious poetry from the late sixteenth century and the early seventeenth century, having come across an untapped, unpublished treasure trove in the Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal. Her father knew Paulhan and said he would introduce her to him. Paulhan had a reputation for encouraging new writers and for being approachable. She met him in the Gallimard building, which was then, as it still is, at No. 5 Rue Sébastien-Bottin, on the Left Bank. Paulhan liked the poetry, and he persuaded Gaston Gallimard, the head of the firm—who, Aury says, "hated that kind of thing"—to publish the collection.

Her first impression of Paulhan was of a big man with broad shoulders and slim hips who was "very nice, very charming, and had a sense of humor." During the editing process, she came to know him better, but on one occasion she covered herself with confusion. "I made myself quite ridiculous," she told me. "I took him, with great care, a copy of the *Lettres Françaises* and told him, 'Put this in your pocket and don't show it to anybody.' He looked at it and smiled, because he was its editor and publisher—something I had no idea of at the time." Their work in the French Resistance drew them closer. "He asked me once if I could conceal people, but I was living with friends at the time and had no room," she said. Paulhan's co-editor of *Lettres Françaises*, Jacques Decour, was arrested by the Germans and shot. Paulhan was also arrested, but he was released upon the intervention of the current editor of the newly revived *Nouvelle Revue Française*, who was a collaborationist.

Had Aury fallen in love at first sight? I asked. "No, no," she said. "It was slow, but it went very—efficiently. I didn't realize what was going on at first. It wasn't the first time that someone had taken an interest in me, and I was just a bit intrigued. At first, I thought it was a caprice. But, no, it was better than that. He was a wonderful person." During the bleak days of the German occupation, they became lovers, adding another element of clandestinity to the one they shared in the Resistance. After the war, Aury worked for a time with André Gide on a magazine called *L'Arche*, and when that collapsed she joined Paulhan on a new literary review that Gallimard supported. By this time, she was widely recognized as his mistress. She was a single woman, now living with her parents. He had a family and was married to a woman who was already suffering from an incapacitating and incurable disease. Aury recalled that she loved Paulhan more than ever and that he seemed to love her, but that fidelity was not his strong suit; he had a roving eye, and there were other women in his life.

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In the early fifties, she told me, the fear that constantly stalks a great passion grew and threatened to overwhelm her. She felt desperate and looked for a new way to express her love, a way to seduce him anew—a way that would appeal to an intellectual and man of letters who was still attractive to younger women. Because she knew he was an admirer of the Marquis de Sade and had written a learned introduction to his works, she began to draw upon her own sexual fantasies, which, she said, had begun during her lonely adolescence. The conjuncture of Paulhan's tastes and her fantasies gave her the idea of writing something. She broached it to Paulhan, but he was skeptical. She said that she would try it anyway. Almost twenty years later, in a pseudonymous account, she described in the third person what happened next. The author had started writing "Story of O" at night, "lying on her left side with her feet tucked up under her, a soft black pencil in her right hand. . . . The girl was writing the way you speak in the dark to the person you love when you've held back the words of love too long and they flow at last. For the first time in her life she was writing without hesitation, without stopping, rewriting, or discarding, she was writing the way one breathes, the way one dreams. The constant hum of the cars grew fainter, one no longer heard the banging of doors, Paris was slipping into silence. She was still writing when the street cleaners came by, at the first touch of dawn."

Night after night, Aury related, she continued writing until the early hours of the morning, writing to save her life, which was her love. "The first sixty pages flowed out of me," she told me. "They wrote themselves. Why was it like that? I don't know. Probably because I had been dreaming—not dreaming, exactly, but thinking about it, I suppose." Full of trepidation, she showed what she had written to Paulhan. "What if the phantasms that it revealed were to outrage her love or, worse, bore him or, worse yet, strike him as being ridiculous?" she wrote in the veiled account. "Not for what they were, of course, but because they emanated from her, and because one rarely forgives in those one loves the vagaries or excesses one readily forgives in others."

Her fears proved groundless. Paulhan read avidly and became her first and certainly most passionate literary admirer. "Have you got any more?" he would ask. "Do you have the next chapter? Keep at it." After the explosive beginning, the writing slowed, she said, not because she found it difficult but because she tried to give the story more of a structure. She wrote on, sometimes in pencil, sometimes in ink, usually in the same small school-exercise books. When she left Paris during the summer, she sent the manuscript, chapter by chapter, to Paulhan by post. She kept nothing—no first draft, no carbon copies. On her return, she continued writing, and during their assignations Paulhan would sometimes ask her to read sections of the story aloud to him.

What fascinated and excited Paulhan, Aury told me, was the relationship of the story to her own life. As she wrote in her pseudonymous account, "I saw, between what I thought myself to be and what I was relating and thought I was making up, both a distance so radical and a kinship so profound that I was incapable of recognizing myself in it. I no doubt accepted my life with such patience (or passivity, or weakness) only because I was so certain of being able to find whenever I wanted that other, obscure life that is life's consolation, that other life unacknowledged and unshared—and then all of a sudden thanks to the man I loved I did acknowledge it, and henceforth would share it with any and all, as perfectly prostituted in the anonymity of a book as, in the book, that faceless, ageless, nameless (even first-nameless) girl."

She wrote that she frequently wondered about the origins of her "oft-repeated reveries, those slow musings just before falling asleep . . . in which the purest and wildest love always sanctioned, or rather always demanded, the most frightful surrender, in which childish images of chains and whips added to constraint the symbols of constraint. . . . All I know is that they were beneficent and protected me mysteriously." Many scenes of the book may have struck readers as neither beneficent nor protective. One scene, for instance, goes as follows:

> They made her kneel down . . . with her bust on an ottoman, her hands still tied behind her, with her hips higher than her torso. Then one of the men, holding her with both his hands on her hips, plunged into her belly. He yielded to a second. The third wanted to force his way into the narrower passage and, driving hard, made her scream. When he let her go, sobbing and befouled by tears beneath her blindfold, she slipped to the floor, only to feel someone's knees against her face, and she realized that her mouth was not to be spared.

Weren't these male fantasies? "That's what everybody says," she replied. "I've always been reproached for that. All I know is that they were honest fantasies—whether they were male or female, I couldn't say. There is no reality here. Nobody could stand being treated like that. It's entirely fantastic."

An often neglected aspect of "Story of O" concerns the heroine's relationships with other women, which reveal a different side of O's character: manipulative, playful, and ruthless in her quest for physical pleasure and psychological control.

> What O missed was not, properly speaking, Jacqueline, but the use of a girl's body, with no restrictions attached. If Natalie had not been declared off-limits to her, she would have taken Natalie, and the only reason she had not violated the restriction was her certainty that Natalie would be given to her at Roissy in a few weeks' time, and that, some time previously, Natalie would be handed over in her presence, by her, and thanks to her.

Aury emphasized that she saw an important distinction between the fantasy of her fable and the authenticity of its material details. She researched the history of clothes, studying a collection in the Louvre, and became fascinated with the eroticism of eighteenth-century female dress. A mask that O is compelled to wear was based on a painting by the artist Léonor Fini that Aury admires. (A beautifully produced collector's edition of the book with illustrations by Fini was later issued.) Roissy, where O's initiation and degradation take place, is north of Paris, and it has been made familiar by the octopus-like Charles de Gaulle Airport that now sprawls across its chalky fields.

And the characters—where did they come from? O began as Odile, Aury wrote, and was based on a close friend of hers named Odile. "She was one of the North African group who came to Paris after the Liberation, and she was very much

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in love with Albert Camus at one time," Aury went on. "We worked together, and she later married a Royal Air Force pilot and went to England. She knew all about the name and was enchanted. But after a few pages I decided that I couldn't do all those things to poor Odile, so I just kept the first letter. It has nothing to do with erotic symbolism or the shape of the female sex."

The other main characters had a slightly more substantial basis. René was "the vestige of an adolescent love, rather the hope of a love that never happened," Aury wrote in the preface to "Return to Roissy." "René had never had the slightest suspicion that I might be capable of loving him." Jacqueline, the model whom O invites to live with her and then seduces, is the character most nearly like someone in her own life. Aury says that her first love was a girl of that name who was at her school. "Jacqueline was a big, blond, and beautiful girl. We were both fifteen, and we were in love with each other." Did they have an affair? "Of course, why not? It was quite common in France, that sort of thing. It never hurt anyone. But her parents did not like it, and took her away from the lycée." She said that Jacqueline had also loved René and had been the first to break her heart. With a stroke of her pen, Dominique Aury finally got her revenge, by shipping the lovely and unsuspecting Jacqueline off to Roissy. As for the character of Sir Stephen, he came out of the blue, based on a man she had glimpsed at a bar, "half-seated on a stool . . . silent, self-composed, with that air of some gray-eyed prince that fascinates both men and women."

Aury then said, "One day, I found that I couldn't go on, and that was all. Paulhan said it was all right. 'You can stop now,' he said." The writing had taken her three months.

Afterward, she read Sade's works for the first time. She deemed the first fifty pages of "120 Days of Sodom" a masterpiece. "Unfortunately, the rest is no good," she told me. "It's unreadable." The content did not surprise her, but Sade made her understand that "we are all jailers, and all in prison, in that there is always someone within us whom we enchain, whom we imprison, whom we silence."

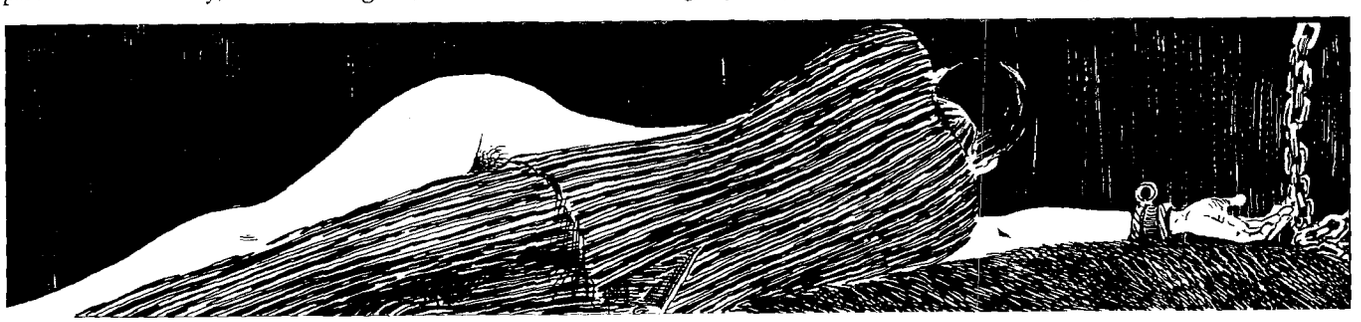
Paulhan, meanwhile, was more enthusiastic than ever about the book and began looking for a publisher. He had his secretary type the manuscript and wrote his comments in the margins. Although he was later suspected of at least doing some heavy editing of the book, if he did not actually write it, Aury maintains that his contribution lay in challenging her in the first place, in encouraging her to press on, and in finally urging her to change just one word in the entire text. "He took out one adjective," she recalled, laughing. " '*Sacrificiel.*' 'Oh no, oh no!' he exclaimed. So I said, 'All right, cross it out.' He changed nothing else—not a single comma."

Paulhan took the manuscript to his friend Gaston Gallimard, but Gallimard turned the book down. (A readers' committee voted four to one against it.) Aury says that Gaston Gallimard was a libertarian, open to new ideas, but he respected contemporary conventions and did not want to be involved in a sexual scandal. The manuscript was therefore passed on to René Defez, of the publishing house Les Deux Rives, who was more daring, having published exposés of the Freemasons and of France's involvement in Indochina. He accepted "Story of O" and paid the author an advance. But the Indochina book had provoked a court case, which was draining his financial resources, and he eventually decided not to take the risk of further prosecutions. He reluctantly returned the manuscript.

Finally, Paulhan went to Jean-Jacques Pauvert, who, at the age of twenty-seven, had already made his mark as an innovative and fearless publisher. His most striking achievement had been publishing the entire works of the Marquis de Sade. (The result was a series of court cases, which went on for eight years.) Pauvert, who is now in his mid-sixties and still active in publishing, told me that Paulhan had brought him the manuscript of "O" at the end of 1953. He read the book overnight and thought it a great work. Was he surprised at its provenance? "Not at all," he said. "I knew that Paulhan was interested in erotic literature at that time. I already knew Dominique Aury, as a journalist, writer, and translator, and I found the writing to be of the same superb quality as her other work." Indeed, Pauvert said, "I had known Dominique Aury since 1942, twelve years before the book appeared. I recognized her style immediately when I first saw the manuscript. She is a great writer and absolutely uncopyable. Paulhan said that he could not write like that—that his own style was quite different, very dry, ironic, and he could not change it."

Pauvert decided to make a special effort to produce a memorable edition of the novel. The first edition of "Story of O" was printed on fine paper and had a handsome yellow cover with the title in black and a title page in two colors; in some copies the title page was embellished with a small medallion-size engraving by Hans Bellmer, a Surrealist painter. Paulhan provided his preface, entitled "Happiness in Slavery," praising the book and calling it both "dangerous" and "decent." Pauvert printed two thousand copies. "It was a very beautiful, unusual book," Pauvert said. "Everything was done with great care."

All the negotiations and the business side of the venture were handled by Paulhan and Pauvert, and the copyright was registered in the name of Éditions Jean-Jacques Pauvert. It was agreed that "Story of O" and its preface would be treated as an entity, with the two works always published together. The author would receive a royalty of twelve per cent and Paulhan a royalty of three per cent. Maurice Girodias, of the Olympia Press, was given the right to publish a single edition in English, and he commis-



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sioned a rapid translation. The book made a relatively sedate transition from private love letter to public erotica. But it began to circulate—to be talked about and read by intellectuals, by the fashionable, and by reviewers. Most of the reviews were favorable, and writers like Georges Bataille and André Pieyre de Mandiargues praised it highly.

Then, in February of 1955, less than a year after its publication, it won a small literary prize. This was the Prix Deux-Magots, which was generally awarded to new and unconventional books; past winners included some well-known and respected novelists, notably Raymond Queneau and Antoine Blondin. For "Story of O," however, the prize was a mixed blessing. While it confirmed the literary quality and the originality of the book, it also attracted the attention of the French authorities. Pauvert and Girodias were summoned by the police and grilled about the book, the identity of its author, and Paulhan's connection with it. Neither man coöperated: they refused to reveal the author's name or her whereabouts.

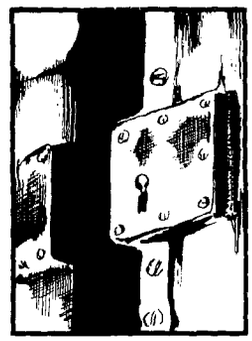
The police found her anyway. "They came to my house, where I was living with my mother," Dominique Aury recalled. "They said they had come to talk to me about the book. My mother kept out of the way, and after they had gone I told her that it had been a mistake. They had been looking for someone else, I said. My mother seemed to accept the explanation."

Paulhan also found himself under attack from his literary peers, most notably when he became a candidate for membership in the Académie Française. Aury confirms the story, long current but often thought apocryphal, that on the day of the vote on Paulhan's candidacy his opponents had placed a copy of "Story of O" on every member's chair in the gold-encrusted chamber. "This tactic didn't impress anybody," she said. "He was elected and we made a good sale. Forty books!"

Fan letters and hate mail arrived. One particularly offensive letter cursed her mother's womb for producing her. "My poor mother!" she exclaimed. Did her mother know? "A friend once mentioned to me, in the presence of my mother, that he believed I was the author. After he left, I thought there would be a showdown with her. But she just turned to me and said, 'Would you like another cup of tea?' "

Aury never mentioned the book to her father, whose secret collection of erotic books she had discovered in her mid-teens. Did he have any idea that she had written it? "Probably, but he never said anything. He was very English in that respect, although he did not have a drop of English blood. He was quite capable of not saying anything when he wanted."

But, in general, Aury's secret was secure. After the scandal that attended its publication began to subside, Pauvert told me, "people took a delight in claiming they had written 'O.' One day in 1957 or 1958, my wife and I went on holiday and stopped in Chartres for dinner at a nice restaurant. At a table behind us, there were five or six people, well dressed, in their late forties or early fifties, probably notables of the town, quite cultivated people, talking about books. Suddenly, one of the men said, 'You must understand that since Paulette wrote "Histoire d'O" she has had a very difficult time—isn't that right, Paulette?' His wife, a good-looking woman, about forty-five years old, wearing a fine pearl necklace, replied, 'Yes. You know, it's been terrible for me. If I had only known what it would turn into, what with my husband's position . . . It's absolutely terrible.' This seemed to be going on all over France. There were literally hundreds of people claiming to be the author of 'O.' " Even today, there are those who believe the novel was actually a group effort, with several authors involved—speculation that Aury finds flattering, if misguided.



The French authorities' actions against "Story of O" ended suddenly and strangely. According to Aury, "A friend of mine—a medical doctor, who had been my gynecologist for years—was living with a man who had just become the Minister of Justice. Paulhan said, 'You must ask her to arrange a meeting.' So I went to her and told her I would like to see the minister. Three days later, I received an invitation to lunch at Croissy, a suburb southwest of Paris. The house was old, with a small garden. At the end of the garden was a ruined chapel, where Napoleon and Josephine had been married. We sat down to lunch, I beside the governor of the Bank of France, with the Minister of Justice and my friend opposite. Lunch was served, and I remember we had chicken with zucchini. It was quite rare to have chicken and zucchini together, but it was very good. Then we got up and went to the salon for coffee. Some of the guests left, and I got up to leave as well. I said, '*Monsieur le Ministre, je vous remercie.*' He said he would see me to my car. I said goodbye, and he kissed my hand. 'Madame,' he said, 'I was very pleased to meet you.' That's all. The next day, he issued a decree ending all the proceedings against 'Story of O.' Under French law, when a minister does that no one can ever resume legal action. That was the end of it."

While the French version sailed clear, Girodias's English edition ran into foul weather. The Brigade Mondaine made one of its increasingly frequent visits to the Olympia Press's office and seized "Story of O," Nabokov's "Lolita," and a number of Olympia's purely pornographic books. Taking defensive action, Girodias hired a new translator to improve the English text of "Story of O," changed the title to the unequivocally down-market "The Wisdom of the Lash," and reprinted the book. (Paulhan's carefully wrought preface was dropped from this version—inadvertently, Girodias later claimed, because the printers were drunk when they were setting type for the book.)

THE last page of "Story of O" contains two short paragraphs. The first reads, "In a final chapter, which has been suppressed, O returned to Roissy, where she was abandoned by Sir Stephen." The second reads, "There exists a second ending to the story of O, according to which O, seeing that Sir Stephen was about to leave her, said she would prefer to die. Sir Stephen gave her his consent."

When I asked Aury about these endings, she shrugged. "I didn't know how to end it, so I left it open. Why not?"

She was much more interested in discussing what had at one point been intended as the final chapter of the book. Entitled "Retour à Roissy," it was written at the same time as the original story but not published with it. "It was extremely bad," she said. "It was a mistake. 'Story of O' was pure dream, pure fantasy. 'Retour à Roissy' was reality, with all its banality, harshness, and sordidness. It was the

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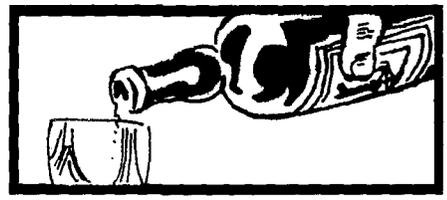
other side of the dream. It was *une mauvaise fabrication*, as we say. It should be suppressed."

It was suppressed, for fifteen years, and the members of the "O" trio—Aury, Paulhan, and Pauvert—appear to have disagreed over who did the suppressing. What is clear is that in 1968 Jean Pauvert, who was having financial problems, was prompted by the commercial success of "Story of O" to approach Aury with an idea for a new book. The result of their discussions was a sequel to "Story of O" that comprised two parts.

The main section was the suppressed chapter: it retained its original name, "Retour à Roissy" ("Return to the Château" in the English translation), which was used as the book's over-all title. In a terse disclaimer, signed "P.R.," that precedes this section she wrote, "The pages that follow are a sequel to *Story of O*. They deliberately suggest the degradation of that work, and cannot under any circumstances be integrated into it." The second part, smaller but more interesting, was the prefatory essay in which Aury described, largely in the third person, how she came to write "Story of O." She entitled the essay "Une Fille Amoureuse" ("A Girl in Love") and signed it "Pauline Réage." The book was published in Paris in 1969.



AURY had begun writing "A Girl in Love" in the spring of 1968, in a hospital room where Jean Paulhan lay dying. Paris was in the throes of revolution as the students fought the police from barricade to barricade. President de Gaulle's government appeared to have lost its nerve, and the threat of civil war seemed frighteningly real. Paulhan was in a clinic in the Paris suburb of Neuilly, and Aury slept on a cot in his room. For months, she worked at Gallimard south of the Seine by day and drove north through the tear gas and the littered streets to Neuilly to be at Paulhan's side at night.

She had not asked permission to stay in the clinic. During one of her early visits, she had noticed a fold-up iron bed in his room—"an abominable bed with lots of bumps in it," she told me—and simply decided to make use of it. "The staff of the clinic were horrid at the beginning. They looked at me as if I were the devil incarnate, but they didn't dare put me out. After the first few weeks, they showed more respect. I slept there for four months."

While she was there, members of the Paulhan family would come and go—all except Germaine, who was confined to her bed at home. The relationship between the two enduring women in Paulhan's life was a curious one. In earlier days, they had met socially, and Aury had occasionally been invited to lunch or dinner at the Paulhan home. Germaine knew about the affair but, according to Dominique Aury, never accepted it; the rest of the Paulhan family seemed to have adopted a more philosophical attitude.

Aury told me that she kept her distance but that Paulhan was not particularly discreet and often asked her to pick him up at his house in her car. On one occasion when she came to fetch him, she recalled, the woman who was looking after Germaine came out into the street and said to Paulhan, in her hearing, "You should tell that girl not to come and stop in front of the door, because when Madame hears the car she weeps." Aury said she made a scene. " 'Jean, you might have told me,' I said. 'It was stupid of me, but it was much more stupid of you.' It was horrible, and I never went near the house again."

Some aspects of the affair were conducted relatively openly. The couple went away on foreign trips—to Venice on one occasion, to Naples on another, and once to Guinea, where Aury had a friend. It was there that Paulhan bought her the heavy gold scarab ring that still encircles her wedding finger.

Several years before Paulhan died, he told Aury that he would like to give her a present. What did she want? "He said he had quite a lot of valuable paintings and could sell one or two. Or I could travel. 'Or,' he said, 'do you want a house?' I said I'd rather have a house." A house was bought, in the countryside not far from Paris, and from time to time Paulhan would come there and stay with her.

During the latter part of Paulhan's life, an incident occurred that, she told me, still puzzled her; she called it "a stupefying encounter." One day, after Germaine had become bedridden, Aury received a telephone call from Germaine's daughter, whom she knew, asking if she might come and see her. " 'All right,' I said. 'Come over to my place.' I thought that she was going to tell me, 'That's enough of that,' and that I should be more serious. But not at all. She said her mother was not very well looked after. She asked me, without mentioning anything to her mother, to come and take care of the household—the kitchen, the servants—and help look after Germaine herself. I told her that it was impossible, not for me—I would do it willingly—but for Germaine. It would kill her." Aury's voice rose as she told this story, with great animation. "It would *kill* her."

Jean Paulhan died in October, 1968, at the age of eighty-three, and Dominique Aury's nightly vigil in the Neuilly clinic ended. Earlier that year, one of her best friends and her beloved father had died within days of each other. In 1970, her mother died. Germaine Paulhan lingered on for two more years. "During the last fourteen years, she had been increasingly paralyzed," Aury said. "It was horrible. Poor Germaine."

"STORY OF O" remained a Paris phenomenon until the mid-sixties, when Barney Rosset, of Grove Press, bought the American rights from Pauvert, with the understanding that a completely new translation would be made. Rosset liked the book enormously. "It was a great book, with great sexuality," he told me.

This version of the novel, complete with Paulhan's original essay and a commentary by the French novelist André Pieyre de Mandiargues, made its début in the United States in 1965. "Story of O" received a generally laudatory reception among reviewers when it first appeared in the United States. "An ironic fable of unfreedom, a mystic document that transcends the pornographic and even the erotic," *Newsweek* wrote. The *Times Book Review* saw Pauline Réage as "a more dangerous writer than the Marquis de Sade," since "art is more persuasive than propaganda. . . . Aiming only to reveal, to clarify, to make real to the reader those dark and repulsive practices and emotions that his better self rejects as improbable or evil, she succeeds in drawing us irresistibly into her perverse world through the magnetism of her own selfless absorption in

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it." In another *Times* piece, Edwin A. Roberts underlined Paulhan's point about the work's essential "decency." "Chains and crops notwithstanding . . . what is ultimately extraordinary about 'Story of O' is that in summary it isn't really very 'dirty.' . . . It is completely matter-of-fact: the author's style is so evenhanded, so crisp, so unemotional that one might think she learned her trade at the Associated Press."

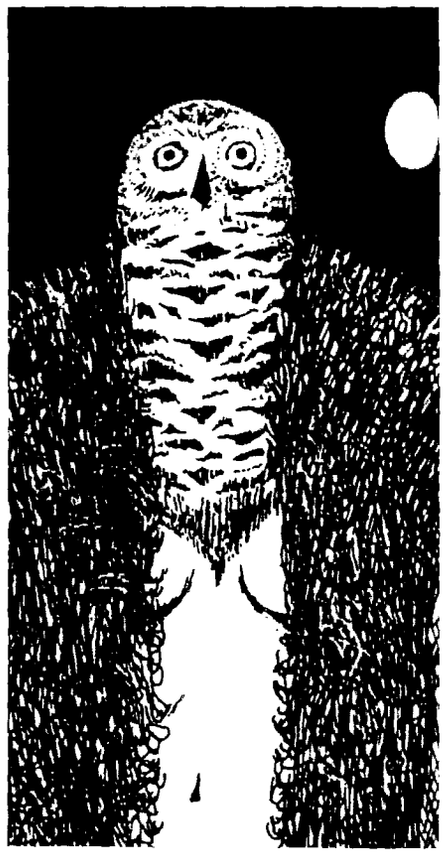
THE new translation—the third English rendering of the French text—was done by one Sabine d'Estrée, and the process introduced another pseudonym, another mystery. The identity of Sabine d'Estrée has remained a secret as well guarded as that of the author whose work she translated. Once again, people in the know have been extraordinarily loyal and discreet. But, while Dominique Aury at least provided some clues through her own writing and the occasional interview, her American translator was less forthcoming. Where one might have expected enlightenment—in a Translator's Note that Grove included in the book—one finds instead a tantalizing mixture of fact, conjecture, coyness, literary one-upmanship, and disinformation. Sabine writes:

> I have never met Pauline Réage, although, through questions of the translation, I have been in indirect communication (via the French publisher, Jean-Jacques Pauvert), and received the author's comments. I trust I am not betraying a confidence, or appearing immodest, when I say that the author has gone out of her way to say how pleased she is with those portions of the translation she had read.
>
> . . . As one who had read the work in French when it first appeared, and admired not only its contents but the extreme felicity of the style, what troubled me most about the earlier English version was its seeming disdain for this obvious style. Subsequently, I learned this translator was a man, and it seemed to me that this fact alone sufficed to explain both the embarrassment—*male* embarrassment—manifest in his version, and also why Pauline Réage had gone out of her way to comment favorably on [illegible]: *Story of O*, written by a woman, demands a woman translator, one who will humble herself before the work and be satisfied simply to render it, as faithfully as possible, without interpretation or unwanted elaboration. Faced with a work such as *O*, male pride, male superiority—however liberal the male, however much he may try to suppress them—will, I am certain, somehow intrude.

Sexual identity has become more confused since d'Estrée wrote this. Perhaps after the mangling it had received from the pens of male translators, "Story of O" did indeed "demand" a female translator. But, alas, it seems that the novel didn't get one, because, I came to believe, Sabine d'Estrée is almost certainly the unmistakably masculine figure of Richard Seaver, a well-known New York publisher.

Seaver lived in Paris in the fifties and was closely associated with the literary magazine *Merlin*, which published some of Samuel Beckett's work, and he also worked as a translator. He returned to the United States in 1954, and a few years later joined Rosset at Grove as its managing editor. Since Seaver was a skilled translator, it would hardly be surprising if Rosset turned to him when he needed a new and polished translation of "O." Seaver left Grove in 1971, and went on to hold prominent positions at Viking and Holt. With his wife, Jeannette, he now runs Arcade Publishing, in Manhattan's Flatiron district. Jeannette is French, and her middle name is Sabine.

Seaver both denies that he is Sabine d'Estrée and declines to say who she is. He told me he had been sworn to secrecy more than thirty years earlier, but would "talk to someone in France" to see if he could be released from his promise. Meanwhile, I examined the Grove Press correspondence about "Story of O," which is in the keeping of the Special Collections Department of Syracuse University Library. The first surprise was that all references to Sabine d'Estrée had the last name spelled slightly differently—"Destré" instead of "d'Estrée." The second surprise was two letters signed "Sabine Destré." One letter thanked Seaver for "the most pleasant lunch yesterday," discussed technical details of the new translation of "O," and asked that all payments for the translation be made out to "Seymour Litvinoff, as attorney," and sent to Litvinoff's Manhattan office. The second letter, to Judith Schmidt, of the Grove staff, acknowledged receipt of the translator's contract that Seaver had asked to be drawn up and sent to her.



DRAWINGS BY GUIDO CREPAX FROM "STORY OF O," NBM PUBLICATIONS CO.

When I talked to Si Litvinoff, who is now a movie producer in California, he confirmed the statement that he had represented Grove in the sixties and added that he was also Seaver's lawyer and friend. He said that he set up the system for payments from Grove to a trust account for a client who then paid Sabine d'Estrée. "The checks came to me. But I cannot say who Sabine is. I don't know who she is," he declared.

After Grove published the novel in 1965, royalties on "Story of O" flowed in to Grove in increasingly large amounts. Between January of 1966 and December of 1968, for example, d'Estrée received over ten thousand dollars—a healthy sum for a translator in those days. The professional relationship between d'Estrée and Seaver was clearly a loyal and lengthy one, extending for fifteen years beyond the translation of "Story of O" and involving at least four other books of French erotica. When Seaver changed publishing houses, he continued employing d'Estrée. There is no trace of d'Estrée's doing translations for anyone but Seaver.

When I put all this to Dominique Aury, she said that she remembered seeing the American translation of the book and that it "seemed to be all right." But she had no memory of being in communication, directly or in any other way, with the translator, she said. She added that she had no idea who Sabine d'Estrée was.

In New York, I talked to two other people who were involved in Grove's publication of "O." One was Judith Schmidt (now Judith Douw), formerly a secretary at Grove Press. She said that her "gut reaction" was that Sabine d'Estrée was Seaver, but that she could not be absolutely sure. The second person, the vet-

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eran New York literary agent Georges Borchardt, who handled the original contract between Pauvert and Grove and still represents the French side of the operation, said only, "It has always been my belief that the translator writing behind her name is Dick Seaver." Certainly if money were to be wagered, I would place mine on the Seavers, even if it meant accepting that Dick took himself—or Jeannette—out to lunch in the autumn of 1964, wrote himself a thank-you letter the following day, and laid an elaborate paper trail to confuse aspiring literary sleuths.

Meanwhile, Seaver told me that he had been in touch with Sabine d'Estrée, who, he said, lives in France. Unfortunately, she had not released him from his vow of silence. She was "a very shy, secretive person," he explained. However, he said, she agreed to write me a letter establishing her identity. I am still waiting for the letter.

NEITHER Dominique Aury nor Jean Paulhan was young when their love affair produced "Story of O." Their common passions were books and passion itself. Their relationship underscored the centrality of love to life, the creative and destructive forces that passion can unleash, and the ease with which a human heart can be broken.

Looking back, what does Dominique Aury think of the book she wrote so long ago? "*C'était une lettre d'amour*," she says forcefully. "Nothing else." And the scandalous side of "O"? "Much ado about nothing," she says.

The dreams and the fantasies abandoned her long ago. The man she wrote for has been dead for a quarter century. All that remains of a great love, a driving passion, and the terrible fear of loss is words on a printed page. The integrity of the book—Dominique Aury's story indissolubly linked with Jean Paulhan's essay—has been respected, as was the integrity of their love affair, with her at his side as he lay dying. The years pass, and Dominique Aury has no regrets as her days and nights gather speed, taking her toward what she calls "a great silence."

"Who am I finally," she once wrote, "if not the long silent part of someone, the secret and nocturnal part which has never betrayed itself in public by any thought, word, or deed, but communicates through subterranean depths of the imaginary with dreams as old as the world itself?" ♦

SHOWCASE

MANDY PATINKIN

BY BRENDAN LEMON

MANDY PATINKIN is in the business of showstopping. He is a musical force of nature. Four times already this year, he has hijacked the David Letterman show with the vigor of his personality and the thrill of his tenor voice. Patinkin doesn't just sing songs; he embodies them. This combination of imagination and musical discipline accounts for the fact that over the past fifteen years you've almost always been able to find Patinkin starring in one of Broadway's musical hits: as Che in "Evita," as Marvin in "Falsettos," and, his most famous role, as Georges Seurat in Stephen Sondheim's "Sunday in the Park with George." In May, he reprised Seurat in concert at the St. James Theatre, and two days later, with the release of the dramatically compelling album "Experiment," in which the composer was represented by six selections, the forty-two-year-old performer solidified his reputation as the quintessential male Sondheim interpreter. But something unusual happened when the insistent Patinkin moved downtown to the Public Theatre to perform "Experience" live: things got very quiet.

"That mood was very much in the spirit of the album," the singer says. "When I looked around for material this time, I was consciously looking for quiet songs—I actually thought about titling the project 'Sh-h-h!' But then it seemed more appropriate to name it after a Cole Porter song that Jonathan Schwartz"—the pop classicist—"had brought to my attention."

In his current project, the fall's most touted new television drama, "Chicago Hope," Patinkin doesn't sing at all. "I play a cardiothoracic surgeon working in a high-tech hospital," he says. "He's the star doctor, a real tornado." The role smacks of scenery-chewing—a charge that has dogged Patinkin in the past. "The over-the-topness will always be there," he says. "That's just who I am." ♦

PHOTOGRAPH BY RICHARD AVEDON

Los Angeles, July 11, 1994.

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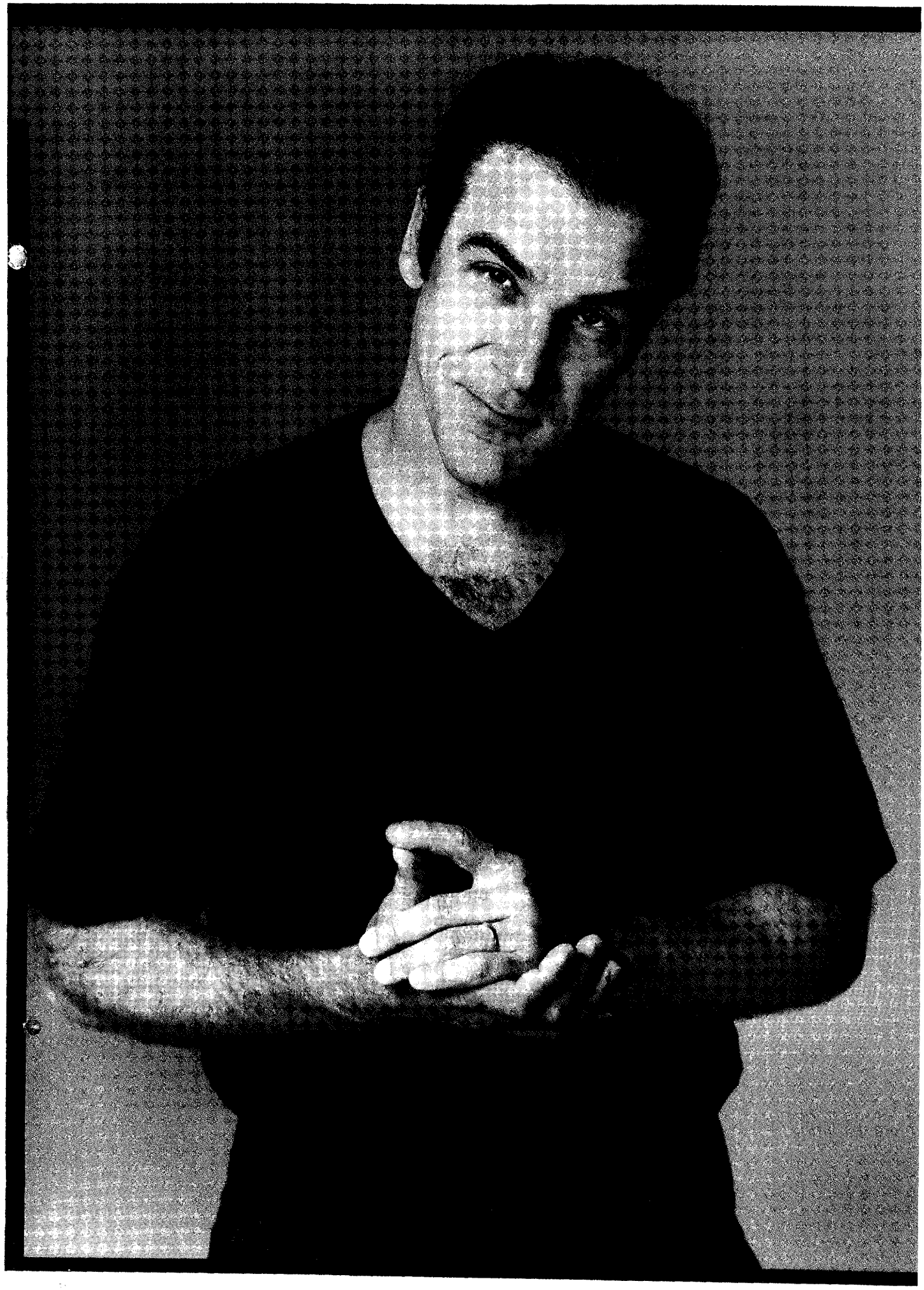

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THE SPORTING SCENE

THE BIG KICKOFF

With its idle riot-trained police, a banished superstar, an assassination, and a bizarrely historic final, this World Cup wasn't what anyone was expecting. But was it enough to keep America interested?

BY JONATHAN WILSON

WORLD CUP USA 94 began in earnest for me during a summer downpour at Foxboro Stadium, in Massachusetts, on June 9th a year ago, when the United States, playing its penultimate game of the dreary, irrelevant U.S. Cup, scored two goals to defeat and humiliate a shabby, inept England team. Near the end of the game, the phalanx of England supporters grouped behind me in the stands lowered their red-and-white St. George's-cross flags and chanted, "We're such shit it's unbelievable!" In England, self-derision and hooliganism often run hand in hand, so I feared the worst, but to my surprise the visiting hooli-fans good-humoredly (England had not yet been eliminated from the World Cup) broke into "U.S.A., give us a song!" How would the local crowd respond? I looked around: everywhere I turned, there seemed to be large groups of under-fourteen girls' teams, all proudly sporting their uniforms and sitting in neat lines bookended by their chaperon coaches. A weak rendition of the unimaginative "U.S.A.!" chant that we heard so much of during the 1984 Los Angeles Olympics wafted across the field and died. Somewhere around the center circle, an England midfield player performed an athletically spectacular but, in soccer terms, utterly inconsequential maneuver. The England fans barely noticed; the rest of the crowd went wild. Oh, Jesus, I thought, this is never going to work.

By December, when the Final Draw took place in Las Vegas, I was more or less convinced that while the marriage of World Cup soccer and United States culture might produce something engagingly bizarre for the locals, for the rest of the world it was a matter to depress the heart. After all, where else, and at what other time, had an enormously popular sporting event been played in a country famously indifferent to it? ("The World Series? We're holding it in New Zealand this year.")

Dick Clark came onstage at the Las Vegas convention center to announce that the draw we were about to witness was "more than just a show" and in fact constituted a bona-fide "historic occasion"; then Barry Manilow sang. Sepp Blatter, the diminutive general secretary of the Fédération Internationale de Football Association, or FIFA, soccer's governing body, arrived to explain with smoke and mirrors the way in which the draw had been seeded to favor wealthy and successful teams with a lot of clout. He conjured Faye Dunaway from the wings and, in what the British reporter sitting next to me described as "a truly nauseating moment," bowed and appeared to kiss her hand, saying, "May I call you Faye?" and then "Would you enjoy if I offer you the official ball?"

Blatter's words floated back to me some months later, when the controversy over official and unofficial sex before games erupted in the world of consensual soccer. The Swiss coach, Roy Hodgson (an Englishman), was reported to have outlawed bonking during the tournament. Pelé weighed in on the side of "*l'amour*," recasting in moderate terms the philosophy of his late coach, João Saldanha, who had famously encouraged the great 1970 Brazil World Cup team to "enjoy themselves" but limited this indulgence to one woman per week—*unless* the women were exceptionally beautiful, in which case the player could find his own limits.

Luckily for P.C. America, this wasn't front-page stuff—very luckily, because it was clear from the start that over here soccer is, to an important degree, a game for gals: schoolgirls, like those I saw at Foxboro, play it by the million, and the United States Women's National Team is the world champion. In Las Vegas, when the team's star, Michelle Akers-Stahl, came onstage to help pluck Ping-Pong balls from goldfish bowls to determine when and where the teams would be playing, my unreconstructed British neighbor, a world soccer expert, asked, "Who the fuck is that?" And when I told him he replied, "Well, what the fuck is *she* doing up there?"

SIX months later, on a steaming-hot afternoon at Soldier Field, in Chicago, the world of entertainment and the world of soccer collided again, during the opening ceremonies for World Cup XV. Dick and Barry had been replaced by the World Historical Individual Oprah Winfrey ("We have her on the air five days a week," bragged a Swedish reporter) and Diana Ross. A lesser figure, President Bill Clinton, then declared the games open, although his speech was drowned out by loud and persistent boos. The jeering was missed by viewers of ESPN, because the station had decided to pass up the gala opening and show the second round of the U.S. Open golf tournament instead.

The booing of politicians and the dull challenge of golf were near-constant blips in the bright foreground of the World Cup. At the four opening ceremonies I attended—in Chicago, New York / New Jersey, Washington, D.C., and Boston (each venue had its own show)—all local politicians, with the exception of Governor Bill Weld, of Massachusetts, were booed. And golf seemed to represent, with its placid greens and languid strokes, the vast indifference to soccer that was supposed to be manifest in America. As it turned out, World Cup soccer did manage to whip golf in the TV ratings—just as, when the United States played, it

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went on to a triumph or two over major-league baseball. The World Cup final drew a larger audience than Games 1 through 6 of the N.B.A. championship.

The host-nation anxiety about the ability of soccer in and of itself to interest and entertain the great American viewing audience and any locals who might turn up in the crowds at the games clearly spawned the extravagant pre-game shows at the first-round matches. Sitting in the various stadiums, I came to realize that those in the electronic media who run our lives had forgotten that people in large sports crowds are capable of amusing and diverting themselves instead of plunging into boredom or anarchy. At the Ireland-Italy game, in Giants Stadium on June 18th, a huge crowd of Ireland supporters sang and chanted their way joyously toward the 4 P.M. kickoff until they were interrupted by the arrival in the center circle of Liza Minnelli. The singer performed a less than compelling number, which dampened but could not quite destroy the wonderful atmosphere that had been building. While the music drove to its charmless climax, Liza's lyrics scrolled up a huge video screen: "The candles in our hand . . . the war we've fought to win," something or other that "brings us pain." The Irish, briefly baffled, recouped and began to chant, softly at first but then with a force rising to match that generated by Liza's amplifiers, "You'll ne-ver beat the Irish!" And it was true: within a few minutes she was vanquished.

The crowds' efforts to enjoy themselves were further impeded by the constant surveillance of the police and the World Cup's "purple beret" private security force. Despite the absence of England's team, and hence its fans, the security apparatus was set up to handle mega-hooliganism. In Chicago, after the opening game, on June 17th, between Germany and Bolivia, I spoke with a street cop posted outside the main gate. The temperature was up in the nineties and the humidity intense: high-risk, lose-your-cool weather. But nobody did.

GARY PANTER

As the peaceable fandom filed past, the cop bemoaned the extra riot training that he and hundreds of his fellow-officers had been put through; the city was geared up for a rerun of the 1968 Democratic National Convention, he said, with a hidden unit of four hundred helmeted men ready to burst forth. As it turned out, crowd behavior at the first game couldn't remotely be compared to the drunken ribaldry during a Chicago Bears football game, let alone English fans on a rampage, and crowd control was, according to the cop, "a piece of cake."

Fifteen days later, after the murder of Andrés Escobar outside a bar in Medellín, Jack Charlton, Ireland's coach (and brother of the English soccer icon Bobby Charlton), commented, "Who wants to play international football if you get assassinated doing it?" The killing in Medellín was not a spontaneous eruption of "passionate" fans fuelled by a sense of national shame but a calculated murder that had less to do with soccer hooliganism than with the singular concatenation of violence, drugs, gangsterism, and gambling in that infamous Colombian city. Escobar's confessed murderer, Humberto Muñoz, was the driver for a wealthy cattle rancher, Santiago Gallon Henao, who many people say had bet heavily on the Colombian team. Henao is also under arrest. Poor Escobar was unfortunate enough to live in a city where violence is endemic and the expression of anarchic rage commonplace. It would be a mistake, I think, to justify the security overkill at the United States World Cup games on the ground that what happened in Medellín could easily have happened here had it not been for the overwhelming presence of the police and the purple berets.

Outside the stadiums, overzealous guards stripped fans not only of smoke bombs and flares but also of anything that could conceivably be transformed into a weapon—or, as the security people liked to say, "a projectile." Umbrellas and flagpoles were confiscated, along with several objects that it was hard to imagine functioning as anything but

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"I think I speak for my entire generation when I say, 'Yes, I will have another drink.' "

• •

themselves: water-bottle caps, apples, and bags of pretzels. The Los Angeles *Times* quoted Dianna Valdez, a security guard, judiciously explaining, "You can throw a pretzel and you can hurt someone." I must admit I missed the smoke bombs. A blue-and-orange haze is de rigueur at big European games, and drifts lightly and harmlessly between crowd and pitch.

No smoke, no fire. On June 26th, after twenty-four games in ten days featuring some of the best international soccer to be seen in a long while, Alan I. Rothenberg, the chairman of World Cup USA 94 (a man who never quite managed to sound as if anything other than the bottom line were on his mind), came on TV at halftime during the United States-Romania game to apply a little spin to his own fears. He reassured viewers that although "everyone was worrying about hooliganism," the World Cup was in fact "a Mardi Gras." When the Mexicans and the Irish had celebrated two days previously, Rothenberg declared, "even the police joined in." Americans were to put aside their ugly fantasies—engendered by whom?—of pitch-invading, referee-chasing, crowd-crushing psychopaths, and join the merry throng of party-animal foreigners dancing in the streets as if every day were Fat Tuesday.

Postscript on hooliganism: One morning, I rode on a Brazilian supporters' bus from downtown San Francisco to the Brazil-Cameroon game, at Stanford. The fans were a quiet bunch—families, mainly, the parents conservatively dressed, the kids all sporting Brazilian soccer shirts with the name and number of their favorite player stamped on the back. The only visible gesture in the direction of carnival was a long, glittering gold wig worn by the bus's oldest occupant, a man in his sixties with dark, leathery skin. Staring at the happy Brazilians, I suddenly realized that for days I had felt that something was missing from these World Cup games. Now I knew what it was: fear and violence. If you grow up attending soccer games in England, you are so used to spine-chilling episodes that the adrenaline flow they bring becomes an essential part of your chemical makeup. If I didn't have to cross the road five times to avoid bands of skinhead thugs, or listen in terror as twenty thousand fans chanted "Kill the Yids" or "You're gonna get your fucking heads kicked in," I didn't know I was at a game. Once I realized that my entire soccer consciousness was perverted and that I could get by without terror in the stands, the games in World Cup USA took on an air of sublimity. The English *weren't coming:* it was heaven.

THE first-round games were heaven in another way, with the minnows from Asia, Africa, and the Americas staging upsets or near things against the big guys. Bolivia and South Korea narrowly lost to the champion, Germany (and both deserved ties); Ireland beat Italy; Saudi Arabia beat Belgium; Nigeria won its group, thrashing Greece and Bulgaria while narrowly losing to Argentina; and, of course, the United States beat Colombia. The pace of these early games was often a little slow (player dehydration does not soften the hearts of sponsors and advertisers with Euromarkets to ply), but unlike the last World Cup, in Italy, where the games were frequently boring, the '94 contests, juiced up by subtle reinterpretations of the offside rule and the larger than usual bait of three points for a win, produced exhilarating soccer.

For a while, though, any excitement generated for Americans by the competitive games seemed likely to dissipate under the pressure of the O. J. Simpson case, which went into overdrive just around the time that Clinton was booed at Soldier Field. But the World Cup had its own scandals brewing, to complement and buoy it almost as much as the unlikely triumphs and progression of the United States team did. There was the Escobar murder, of course, but before that there was Maradona. In his first appearance of the tournament, at Foxboro, he swaggered through Argentina's game against Greece, dishing out perfectly weighted passes to his forwards and laying the ball off with deft flicks before capping his performance by sending a hard, swerving left-foot shot past an immobilized Greek goalkeeper and into the top left-hand corner of the net. Eight minutes before the end of a 4–0 rout, Maradona's coach, Coco Basile, pulled

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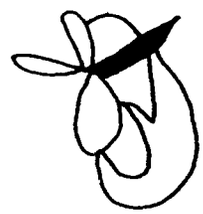
him so that—as Basile later explained—the star could receive the ovation he deserved. Before leaving the field, Maradona approached the referee and graciously extended his hand. The ambush was so effective that the ref clasped and shook before realizing how easily he had been seduced. The huge, Greek-dominated crowd at Foxboro, which had chanted "Maradona prima donna!" throughout the first half and booed the Argentine every time he was tripped by a defender and awarded a free kick, now offered a smattering of respectful applause. He was Lazarus returned from the grave, nasty coke habit behind him, the pellet gun with which he had spattered some Argentine reporters tucked safely in a drawer, the hand that had punched in the goal against England in 1986 ("a little bit of the head of Maradona, a little bit of the hand of God," as he himself put it) held lawfully by his side.

In his next game, against Nigeria, Maradona turned up the heat, and, in retrospect, he did seem rather sprightly out there, especially for a guy who three weeks earlier had departed some of Argentina's World Cup warmup games shapeless and out of breath. Sharp backheels, close control, even the occasional longer run that gave you a quick flash of the old, truly sensational Maradona—he put on a show that was histrionic, melodramatic, and compelling. At the end of the game, while the adoring Argentine fans rained down confetti and sang their melodic chant of "*Vamos, vamos, Argentina*," Maradona put his arm around the girl who had come to escort him to the drug test. He smiled, waved, and blew kisses to the crowd, and the girl, somewhat bashfully, smiled, too. Four days later, it was revealed that Maradona had been playing under the influence of an ephedrine cocktail consisting of nasal spray, weight-reduction pills, and other esoteric discomfort-mollifiers. His enterprise was Faustian—to lose twenty-six pounds in three months, get his legs going, and rewire his soccer synapses. He very nearly succeeded.

To everyone's surprise, the United States team (I have been unable to figure out why it was constantly referred to as "Team U.S.A."—nobody ever talked about "Team Norway" or "Team Morocco") didn't require divine intervention to get into the second round. It tied Switzerland, thanks to a powerful free kick from Eric Wynalda, and then beat Colombia fair and square.

The game against Colombia was not without its macabre overtones. Before a ball was kicked, death threats from Medellín had been faxed in against two Colombian coaches and the midfielder Gabriel Gómez, and Gómez was benched for the game. There can be no doubt that the Colombian players were affected by the threats, and after the Escobar murder we realized how right the team had been to take them seriously. Even so, for fifteen minutes the Colombians came out and played as if they were going to put at least five goals past Tony Meola. The fact that they didn't, and that the United States managed to turn the game around, suggests that we shouldn't regard the win, which Alexi Lalas, the United States defender, later called "incredible, historical, and very cool," as a hollow victory.

The great day for "Team U.S.A." took place in the Rose Bowl, under a blue sky that featured a circling hawk and a small plane trailing an advertisement for a common brand of hamburger. Ten minutes before halftime, John Harkes, cutting in from the left wing, sent a cross into the no man's land in front of the Colombian goalkeeper, and Andrés Escobar, trying to force the ball out of play, accidentally slid it past his own goalkeeper. The crowd released an ocean-deep roar. Escobar lay stretched out on the ground a long time before rousing himself. The goalie plucked the ball from the back of the net. A foreign journalist seated on my right said, "It's an optical delusion," which is a good way to describe the improbability of the game from that moment on, as the United States players angled past opponents, arrived from nowhere to make saving tackles, and seven minutes into the second half contrived to score a delightful second goal, this time unilaterally.



For true team fans, sport has much more to do with anxiety than with entertainment, and in the last ten minutes of the game neophyte American soccer fans experienced the kind of tension and dread that attend the concluding moments of a close basketball, football, or baseball game: you don't want more great plays, you simply want your team to win. With ten minutes left, however, they got a great play. The United States forced a corner on the right. The ball came high across the area, and Marcelo Balboa, with his back to the goal, launched a bicycle kick that sent the ball a quarter of an inch to the left of the Colombian goalpost. Had it gone in, it would have been the goal of the tournament. As it was, it provided an improbable flourish with which to cap the afternoon's heroics. The bicycle kick as a shot, which the tournament organizers and advertising sponsors had fixed on as *the* soccer move to represent the game's slam-dunk excitement to Americans, is extremely rare. Of the more than a thousand goals that Pelé scored in his career, only two came from bicycle kicks. Nevertheless, it was the subject of the official Peter Max poster and, to judge from TV commercials, is responsible for about ninety per cent of the scoring in soccer. But, despite its real-world rarity, here was Balboa, a *defender*, encapsulating in a single movement, as if scripted, the topsy-turvy "optical delusion" of America's victory.

How was America to understand this victory? Afterward, in the "mixed zone" (the area set aside for players to meet the press), a number of indigenous reporters were intensely interested in players' "emotions." At one point, I asked Lalas what he thought about the yellow card that had been issued to him in the second half for disputing an offside call that nullified a goal. He replied, "I think he gave me a yellow card because I scored a goal with my feet, and I'm not supposed to do that." I thought this was a pretty good soccer joke, but I saw that Lalas had drawn a blank elsewhere. The pressing issues were not comic or technical feats—how the United States central defenders had closed down the Colombian thrust up the middle, or whether it had been a relief when Faustino Asprilla, the Colombian striker, didn't come out for the second half, or decisions about 4-4-2 or 4-5-1 formations—but the "precise emotions" (I heard this phrase repeated continually) that Lalas and all the others had experienced when the final whistle blew.

The desire to record a sportsperson's "precise emotions" at moments of vic-

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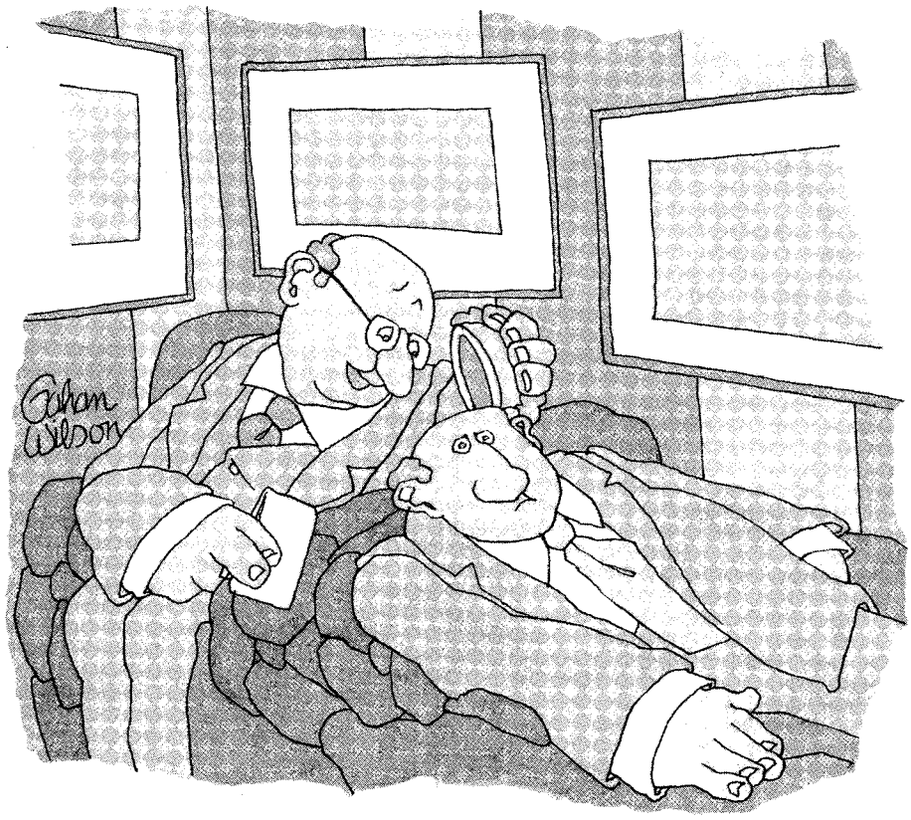
tory or defeat has been with us for some years now. It is part of the growing sentimentalization of American life (have you *seen* Clinton bite his lower lip?), and, as the halftime cameras wander ever wider in search of tear-jerking imagery, now strives to incorporate the "precise emotions" of a player's parents, too. During the World Cup, it struck me as odd to expect players whose body language had already conveyed their emotions, through somersaults on the field, flag-drapings, tears, hugs, kisses, shuffles, raised fists, air punches, and so on, to translate their actions into words for public consumption. Especially as the words must fail. The athlete, under pressure to produce something resembling poetry, feels that he has blundered if all he can muster is "I felt like hugging Tony Meola" or "I felt like doing a somersault," and so he stumbles through "great" and "fantastic," until he has produced something banal enough to satisfy the reporter, by which point, of course, the rousing moment on the field has been fully anesthetized.

ALONG with its focus on "emotion," the conference after the United States-Colombia match limned another singular phenomenon of World Cup USA: it wasn't easy to find good soccer conversations. For, while the stadiums and their immediate environs were authentic centers of soccer life, as soon as you were back downtown—whether in New York, Boston, San Francisco, or Los Angeles—the sense of a knowledgeable, soccer-enthused populace all but vanished. In Italy in 1990, despite the lousy games, you could still talk soccer in any café well into the night and the following morning; here you had to search out an ethnic enclave—and one that spoke your language.

I found my soccer talk on buses and trains and in taxicabs to and from airports. I spoke to Ghanaians, Ethiopians, Nigerians, Iranians, Mexicans, Russians—a broad spectrum of immigrants, plus numerous representatives of the native Latino population. Our conversations, I began to feel, had an air of secrecy about them, as if we were talking behind America's back. We usually started with the game of the day but were soon, like any baseball fanatic, reaching back far into the past, invoking legendary moments of games seen or only heard about. We "foreigners" were like children trying to capture the interest of distracted, absorbed parents. If Americans couldn't see how much soccer mattered, what hope was there for broader understanding?

But, of course, they *couldn't* see. For a team sport to mean anything, you have to grow up with it and become attached, stupidly and blindly, to the fortunes of your team, like the spectators at the Argentina-Greece game holding an enormous banner that read "MAD AND ETERNALLY FAITHFUL OLYMPIAKOS." You also need a history and context for soccer discussion. As with baseball, you have to know what happened thirty years ago in order for what happens today to be meaningful. Moreover, it's hard to develop a passion for the game if you never played it as child. All the discussion about whether or not the graft is going to take, and whether or not a professional league will succeed in the United States, seems to me premature. The graft won't take, and the professional league, bereft of great players and great teams, will fail. But in fifty years' time, when a quarter of the country's first language is Spanish and the kids now playing (all sixteen million of them) have become soccer-knowledgeable parents and grandparents able to say, "I saw Roberto Baggio save Italy's ass with a last-minute goal in 1994," Americans might start acquiring the ingredients necessary to cook up a soccer culture.

My soccer conversations with "foreigners" continued in stark contrast to those I had with "real" Americans. As far as I could tell, among "real" Americans African-Americans were the group most profoundly alienated both from soccer and from the World Cup. While other groups got behind "their" team—whether Italy, Ireland, Germany, Greece, Sweden, or Mexico—African-Americans showed no great interest in supporting Cameroon or Nigeria. Spike Lee did throw a fund-raising dinner for the Cameroon team, but there were no street celebrations in black neighborhoods. The reasons for African-American indifference are not hard to understand. First, Africa is a continent, not a country, and about forty African countries did not make it to the finals. Second, African-Americans are very American in their taste in sports. I won't forget the look of relief that crossed the face of the cabbie driving me into Chicago when, after we had struggled through a couple of awkward exchanges about soccer (the city had issued a World Cup guidebook to everyone likely to come in contact



"Looking good!"

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with tourists, and my driver held a copy on his lap), I asked him what he thought about Scottie Pippen's refusal to get off the bench during Game 3 of the Bulls-Knicks playoff series. He shook his head as if shaking out the soccer. We passed a huge mural of Michael Jordan, and a poster of His Airness spinning a soccer ball. (Michael's image is to Chicago what Lenin's was to Leningrad.) "That coach," he replied conspiratorially. "That coach must have said something disrespectful to Scottie."

Nigeria, to judge by the crowds I observed at Foxboro, did become a favorite underdog team for white middle-class kids. I watched the Nigerians' first game on television, and anyone could instantly understand the appeal of their fast, free-flowing soccer. There was also the arresting moment of Rashidi Yekini's celebration after he had scored his country's first-ever World Cup goal. He ran into the net, put his arms through, looked heavenward, and shook his fists. Kevin Flynn, the halftime commentator on ESPN 2, who specialized in inanities throughout the tournament, voiced-over on the replay, Beavis and Butt-head style, "Let me outta here." Yekini, it turned out later, was praying to Allah.

It was Nigeria, of course, that came within ninety seconds of sending the Italians home from the round of sixteen to what would have been a less than pleasant welcome at the Rome airport. At that game, I sat a few rows behind George Bush, Hakeem Olajuwon, and two lines of blue-blazered, blue-shirted officials from the Italian Soccer Federation. As a matter of principle, it seemed, no matter how hot it got at games (and it got very hot), neither the Italian administrators nor the Italian journalists would ever remove their jackets. I thought this was a simple matter of suffering for style, until a woman journalist from one of the Italian dailies explained to me that the men were afraid of drafts. They were worried, she said, about the dangers of frequent movement between the air-conditioned hospitality tents and media center and the humid, sultry stadiums and mixed zones. When Roberto Baggio scored the goal that saved Italy, and transformed himself from a "wet rabbit" into a hero (Gianni Agnelli, his club chairman and the owner of both Juventus and Fiat, had called Baggio a "*coniglio bagnato*"; Agnelli himself is known throughout Italy by that harshest of sobriquets "the Lawyer"), there was much hugging among the adminstrators and kissing of bald spots but still no *déshabillage*.

Italy went on to beat Spain in the quarter-finals, with more Baggio heroics, and moved into a semifinal berth against upstart Bulgaria. I had watched Bulgaria's disastrous first game against Nigeria on television and been fascinated by the health-police scolding of the Bulgarians by the ESPN play-by-play man Randy Hahn. Confronted on his monitor with a shot of a mustachioed Bulgarian assistant coach lighting up on the bench, Hahn intoned, "You can't have that smoking in soccer if you're going to beat the Nigerians." Hahn's partner, Ron Newman, a former player and coach, was properly silent, but Hahn prodded him: "There's no smoking in soccer, is there, Ron?" "Not in the dressing rooms," Ron replied. Randy's pontificating was of a piece with the general tenor of English-language commentary, which was—understandably, I suppose—designed to educate rather than excite. However, the dull combination of homilies and explanations insured that no ABC or ESPN broadcaster could approach the cult status of Andrés Cantor, of Univision, who turned everybody on with his orgasmic cries of "GOOOL!" always followed by postcoital-tristesse moans of "Goooool," drawn out until the celebrations on the field died down.

The Bulgarians, it seemed—once they had pulled their act together—could beat almost anyone, whether their coaches smoked or not. They defeated Greece, Argentina, and Mexico before pulling off the biggest upset of the tournament by knocking out Germany, the defending champions, in the quarter-finals. The Germans, like the Italians, had advanced through the tournament with a series of unimpressive victories, but even when Germany plays poorly there is a sense of inevitability about its journey to the finals. (It had been in four of the previous five.) Then on July 10th at the Meadowlands the Bulgarians, after falling behind 1–0 on a controversial penalty, raised their game. Hristo Stoichkov, their star player, somehow contrived to lift and bend a left-footed free kick over the German wall of defenders and into the top right-hand corner of the net, and two minutes later Yordan Letchkov, whose bald pate had

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become a distinctive World Cup signifier, like Roberto Baggio's ponytail or Carlos Valderrama's Harpo Marx mop, ran in to meet a cross from the right and headed the ball exuberantly past Bodo Illgner and into the German goal.

For Dimitar Penev, the Bulgarian coach, a World Cup victory was a novelty. As a player, he had appeared in three World Cups—in 1966, 1970, and 1974—but had never made it past the first round. I remember, as a teen-ager, watching in horror as the '66 Bulgarian team tried to drive Pelé out of the competition with a calculated and brutal physical assault. Back then, Penev was a journeyman player—never a star. Now here he was, looking uncomfortable under the glare of the television lights, after putting together and directing a team that, happily, played a lot more like Brazil than like the old Bulgaria.

AFTER the United States had been eliminated from the competition, in a cheerless, one-sided July 4th game against Brazil—a match that received a surplus of hyperbolic media attention—America, it seemed, took a respite from soccer. Until the final, when national interest rekindled, it was a struggle to maintain a strong sense of the party in progress and of the building excitement. I tried to avoid talking to people who I knew were not interested in soccer, and it was in a spirit of withdrawal that I headed out to the Meadowlands game between Italy and Bulgaria.

In the first twenty-six minutes, Baggio, getting better and better as the tournament went on, scored two superb goals, and then the Italian defense closed up shop. The Bulgarians got into one of those arguing, gesticulating moods that afflict teams when they know they are going to lose. Stoichkov managed a goal from the penalty spot, but his team never posed a real threat. Baggio, having done his job, limped off with a strained hamstring—an injury that almost kept him out of the final. At the end of the game, he was the last player to leave the field. He stood for a moment in stockinged feet taking in the colossal crowd noise—horns, Klaxons, trumpets, a discordant "Olé, olé." He might have burst into song—the *four* tenors—but instead he burst into tears.

No matter how hard I tried (and how pumped up the crowd at Giants Stadium) I couldn't rid myself of a depressing sense of the tournament's attenuation in American life. The journey back to Manhattan from the Meadowlands confirmed my apprehensions in the worst way. Along with other journalists, I was eager to return to the city in order to watch the Brazil-Sweden game on TV. We had left in plenty of time, but the media bus got stuck in traffic about half a mile from the Lincoln Tunnel. On a whim, our driver left the main road, and got into an even worse jam. When the bus hadn't moved at all for half an hour, he suggested that we all dismount and try to take a ferry. The journalists straggled down to the ticket office on the dock, dragging cameras and cases, but, we were snootily informed, there were only four spaces available on the last midtown ferry, and those had been reserved for clients of Paine Webber. There was another ferry point a mile away—if we wanted to try that. We broke ranks and began to resemble characters in one of those European movies from the sixties in which a group of people wander around in some no man's land for hours exploring a shared existential crisis. This, I thought bitterly, is what happens when you hold the World Cup in a place where not enough people really give a shit. I stared across the river and felt the rage build. Americans had been interested not in soccer but only in their excruciating knee-jerk patriotism ("U.S.A.! U.S.A.!")—that, and boasting about what a good show they'd put on, and how great the U.S. was at organizing big events, and the *merchandising*. My list of gripes was suddenly endless, and all because I couldn't get to the other side of the river (there didn't seem to be a bar close at hand on the New Jersey side) to watch my fiftieth soccer match in twenty-seven days.

Eventually, I found a cab to take me through the tunnel, and I arrived at my destination—the Forty-sixth Street Brazilian street party—with about twenty minutes to go in the Brazil-Sweden semifinal. The police had cordoned off about five hundred prospective revellers inside blue "Do Not Cross" barriers. Little Brazilian and American flags were strung across the street from above the small parade of Brazilian stores: Rosetta Lighting and Electrical Supplies, the Ipanema Restaurant, and, the main focus of our attention, the Emporium Brasil café, where two televisions—one large, one small—had been set up high in the storefront window. When Romário scored, the street (or our little fenced-off part of it) erupted into an extended and joyful samba. I inclined to the dance but couldn't help thinking about the scene as it would look from space—much of the world dancing to soccer but on the sleeping continent of North America only two tiny animated dots, one out in California, and one, cordoned off like a dangerous infection, between Fifth and Sixth Avenues in New York.

THE Brazilians went on to win the final, but it was a disappointing match. The heat (soccer really isn't a game that thrives in ninety-five degrees), injuries to key players, and the domination of the two defenses combined to provide a static, uninspired nil-nil tie that carried through overtime. The victory came on penalty kicks, which means on arbitrary fortune. Brazil's win was sealed when an exhausted Roberto Baggio, visibly suffering from the effects of his strained hamstring, lofted the ball over the crossbar. Italy must feel spooked: four years ago, it went out on penalty kicks to Argentina in the cup semifinals.

After fifty-two games, I could feel my own powers of soccer analysis dimming. For a month, I had been running on Snickers bars and Coke, provided free in the media centers by the corporate sponsors, and by now I could barely distinguish sugar rushes from soccer enthusiasm. Still, there was one battle left to fight. Early on the day of the final, ABC News released a poll that looked to me like a godsend for soccer's American critics. It claimed that thirty-five per cent of Americans found soccer to be "on the dull side" or "a big bore." Thirty-five per cent found it "interesting," but only twenty-two per cent said it was "exciting." Yet even a small bore, like the final, had held the power to engage, if not enthrall, almost two billion people outside America. I began to make excuses in my head for the depressing inactivity of the final, but then I realized that the best response to snide sports commentators and gloating soccer haters is to explain, perhaps, but never apologize. ♦

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FICTION

THE COURIER

BY JOHN IRVING

BEHIND every journey is a reason. It was her parents' fault, she decided. Her name was Nancy, she came from an Iowa pig-farming family of German descent, and she'd been a good girl all through high school in a small Iowa town; then she'd gone to the university in Iowa City. Because she was so blond and bosomy, she'd been a popular candidate for the cheerleading squad, although she lacked the requisite personality and wasn't chosen; still, it was her contact with the cheerleaders that led her to meet so many football players. There was a lot of partying, a practice which Nancy was unfamiliar with, and she'd not only slept with a boy for the first time; she'd slept with her first black person, her first Hawaiian person, and the first person she'd ever known who came from New England—he was from somewhere in Maine, or maybe it was Massachusetts.

She flunked out of the University of Iowa at the end of her first semester; when she went home to the small town she'd grown up in, she was pregnant. She thought she was still a good girl, at least to the degree that she submitted to her parents' recommendation without questioning it: she would have the baby, put it up for adoption, and get a job. She went to work at the local hardware store, in feed-and-grain supply, while she was still carrying the child; soon she began to doubt the wisdom of her parents' recommendation—men her father's age began propositioning her, *while* she was pregnant.

She delivered the child in Texas, where the orphanage physician never let her see it—the nurses never even let her know which sex it was—and when she came home, her parents sat her down and told her that they hoped she'd learned her "lesson"; they hoped she would "behave." Her mother said she prayed that some decent man in the town would be "forgiving" enough to marry her one day. Her father said that God had been "lenient" with her; he implied that God was disinclined toward leniency twice.

For a while, Nancy tried to comply, but so many men of the town attempted to seduce her—they assumed she'd be easy—and so many women were worse; they assumed she was already sleeping with everyone. This punitive experience had a strange effect on her: it didn't make her revile the football players who'd contributed to her downfall; oddly, what she loathed most was her own innocence. She refused to believe she was immoral. What degraded her was to feel stupid. And with this feeling came an anger she was unfamiliar with—it felt foreign; yet this anger was as much a part of her as the fetus she'd carried for so long but had never seen.

SHE applied for a passport. When it came, she robbed the hardware store of every cent she could steal. She knew that her family originally came from Germany; she thought she should go there. The cheapest flight (from Chicago) was to Frankfurt; but if Iowa City had been too sophisticated for her, Nancy was unprepared for the enterprising young Germans who frequented the area of the Hauptbahnhof and the Kaiserstrasse, where almost immediately she met a tall, dark drug dealer named Dieter. He was enduringly small-time.

It was Dieter's theory that all Germans were sexually ashamed of themselves. That was why he preferred India; it was both a spiritual and a sensual country. What he meant was that, for very little, you could buy anything there. And by that he meant women and young girls, in addition to the drugs, but he told Nancy only about the quality of the hashish—what he would pay for it there, and what he would get for it back in Germany. He didn't tell her the whole plan—specifically, that her American passport and her farm-girl looks were the means by which he would get the stuff through German customs. Nancy was also the means by which he'd planned to get the Deutsche marks through Indian customs. (It was marks he took to India; it was hashish he brought back.) Dieter had made the trip with American girls before; he'd also used Canadian girls, whose passports aroused even less suspicion.

With both nationalities, Dieter followed a simple procedure: he never flew on the same plane with them; he made sure they'd arrived and passed through customs before he boarded a plane for Bombay. He always told them he wanted them to recover from the jet lag in a comfortable room at the Taj Mahal Hotel, because, when he got there, they'd be doing some "serious business"; he meant they'd be staying in less conspicuous lodgings.

As for the trip back to Germany, Dieter would precede the designated young woman by a day; if she were delayed in German customs, Dieter would take this as a sign that he shouldn't meet her. But Dieter had a system, and not one of his young women had ever been caught—at either end.

Dieter's women were outfitted with the kind of well-worn travel guides and paperback novels that suggested earnestness in the extreme. The travel guides were dog-eared and scribbled-in, to draw the attention of customs officials to those areas of cultural or historical importance so keenly boring that they would attract only graduate students in the field. As for the paperback novels, by Hermann Hesse or Lawrence Durrell, they were fairly standard indications of their readers' proclivities for the mystical and poetic; these latter tendencies were dismissed by customs officials as the habitual concerns of young women who'd never been motivated by money. Surely drug trafficking could be of no interest to them.

However, these young women were not above suspicion as occasional drug users; their personal effects were thoroughly searched for a modest stash. Not once had a shred of evidence been found. Dieter was undeniably clever; a large

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amount of the stuff was always secreted in a dog-proof container of unflinchingly crass but basic ingenuity.

In retrospect, poor Nancy would conclude that the enslavement of sexual corruption empowered all of Dieter's other abilities. Nancy had to admit that she'd gone along with Dieter strictly because of the sex. Her football players had been friendly oafs, and most of the time she'd had too much beer. With Dieter, she smoked just the right amount of hashish or marijuana—Dieter was no oaf. He had the gaunt good looks of someone who'd recently recovered from a life-threatening illness; he was one of those men who advance through a number of increasingly young and naïve women, his sexual appetite growing confused with his desire to introduce the innocent to a series of progressively degrading experiences. For as soon as he gave Nancy some courage in her sexual potential, he undermined what slight self-esteem she had; he made her doubt herself and hate herself in ways she'd never thought possible.

In the beginning, Dieter had simply asked her, "What is the first sexual experience that you had some confidence in?" And when she didn't answer him—because she was thinking to herself that masturbation was the *only* sexual experience that she had *any* confidence in—he said, "Masturbation, right?"

"Yes," Nancy said quietly.

He was very gentle with her. At first, they'd just talked about it.

"Everyone is different," Dieter said philosophically. "You just have to learn what your own best way is."

Then he told her some stories, to relax her. One time, as an adolescent, he'd stolen a pair of panties from the underwear drawer of his best friend's mother. "When they lost whatever scent they had, I put them back in her drawer and stole a fresh pair," he told Nancy. "The thing about masturbation was that I was always afraid I'd be caught. I knew a girl who could make it work only when she was standing up."

Nancy told him, "I have to be lying down."

This conversation itself was more intimate than anything she'd known. It seemed so natural, how he'd led her to show him how she masturbated. When she finished, he entered her; at that point, she was always aroused.

One time, when she'd finished, he said, "Roll over on your stomach. Just wait right there. I have a surprise for you." When he came back to their bed, he snuggled beside her, kissing her again and again, while he moved one hand underneath her until he could touch her with his fingers, exactly as she'd touched herself. The first time, she never saw the dildo. It was very big, but he never hurt her with it, and when she was so excited that she had to stop kissing him—she had to scream—he took the dildo out of her and entered her himself, from behind and with the fingers of his hand still touching her. (Compared to the dildo, Dieter was a little disappointing.)

Her parents had once warned Nancy that "experimenting with sex" would make her crazy, but the madness that Dieter had incited didn't seem to be a dangerous madness. Still, it wasn't the best reason to go to India.

DIETER was concerned that an Indian customs official would confiscate the dildo—but only if Nancy took pains to conceal it, he said. He insisted that she carry it casually—with her toilet articles, in her carry-on bag. But the thing was enormous. Worse, it was a frightening pink, mock-flesh color, and the tip, which was modelled on a circumcised penis, had a bluish tinge—like a cock left out in the cold, Nancy thought. And where the fake foreskin was cropped, there seemed to linger a residue of the lubricating jelly, which could never quite be wiped away.

Nancy put the thing in an old white athletic sock—the long kind, meant to be worn above the calf. She prayed that the Indian customs officials would ascribe to the dildo some unmentionable medicinal purpose—anything other than that most obvious purpose for which it was intended.

Understandably, she wanted Dieter to take it with *him*, on *his* plane, but he pointed out to her that the customs officials would then conclude he was a homosexual; homosexuals, she should know, were routinely abused at every country's port of entry. Dieter also told Nancy that the excessive illegal Deutsche marks were travelling with him, on his plane, and that the reason he didn't want her flying with him was that he didn't want her to be incriminated if he was caught.

Later, Nancy would wonder why she'd believed him; with hindsight, such errors of judgment are plain to see. Nancy would reflect that it hadn't been difficult for Dieter to convince her to bring the dildo to Bombay. It hadn't been the first time that a dildo gained such easy access to India, but what a lot of trouble this particular instrument inspired.

Nancy had never been to the East; she was introduced to it at the Bombay airport, at about two in the morning. She'd never seen men so diminished, so damaged, and so transformed by turmoil, by din, and by wasteful energy; their ceaseless motion and their aggressive curiosity reminded her of scurrying rats. And so many of them were barefoot. She tried to concentrate on the customs inspector, and the two policemen who attended him; they weren't barefoot. But the policemen—a couple of constables in blue shirts and wide blue shorts—were wearing the most absurd leg warmers she'd ever seen, especially in such hot weather. And she'd never seen Nehru caps on cops before.

The dildo lay untouched in the long athletic sock while the policemen and the customs inspector pawed through the clothes in her rucksack and emptied her carry-on bag, which was really just an oversized imitation-leather purse. One of the policemen picked up the battered, paperback copy of Lawrence Durrell's "Clea," the fourth novel of the Alexandria Quartet, of which Dieter had read only the first, "Justine." Nancy hadn't read any of them; but the novel was dog-eared where the last reader had presumably stopped reading, and it was at this marked page that the constable opened the book, his eyes quickly finding that passage which Dieter had underlined in pencil for just such an occasion. This copy of "Clea" had made the trip to India and the return trip to Germany with two of Dieter's other women, neither of whom had read the novel or even the passage Dieter had marked. He'd chosen the particular passage because it would doubtless identify the reader to any international customs authority as a harmless fool.

The policeman was so stymied by the passage that he handed the book to his fellow-constable, who looked stricken, as if he'd been asked to crack an indecipherable code; he, too, passed the book

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on. It was the customs inspector who finally read the passage. Nancy watched the clumsy, involuntary movement of the man's lips, as if he were isolating olive pits. Gradually, the words, or something like the words, emerged aloud; they seemed incomprehensible to Nancy. She couldn't imagine what the customs inspector and the constables made of them.

"The whole quarter lay drowsing in the umbrageous violet of approaching nightfall," the customs inspector read. "A sky of palpitating velours which was cut into by the stark flare of a thousand electric light bulbs. It lay over Tatwig Street, that night, like a velvet rind." The customs inspector stopped reading, looking like a man who'd just eaten something odd. One of the policemen stared angrily at the book, as if he felt compelled to confiscate it or destroy it on the spot, but the other constable was as distracted as a bored child; he picked up the dildo in the athletic sock and unsheathed the giant penis as one would unsheathe a sword. The sock drooped limply in the policeman's left hand while his right hand grasped the great cock at its root, at the rock-hard pair of makeshift balls.

Suddenly seeing what he held, the policeman quickly extended the dildo to his fellow-constable, who took hold of the instrument by the cropped foreskin before he recognized the exaggerated male member, which he instantly handed to the customs inspector. Still holding "Clea" in his left hand, the customs inspector seized the dildo at the scrotum; then he dropped the novel and snatched the sock from the first, gaping policeman. But the impressive penis was more difficult to sheathe than to unsheathe, and in his haste the customs inspector inserted the instrument the wrong way. Thus were the balls jammed into the heel of the sock, where they made an awkward lump—they didn't fit—and the bluish tip of the thing (the circumcised head) protruded loosely from the open end of the sock. The hole at the end of the enormous cock appeared to stare out at the constables and the customs inspector like the proverbial evil eye.

"Where you stay?" one of the policemen asked Nancy. He was furiously wiping his hand on his leg warmers—a trace of the lubricating jelly, perhaps.

"Always carry your own bag," the other constable advised her.

"Agree to a price with the taxiwalla before you get in the car," the first policeman said.

The customs inspector wouldn't look at her. She'd expected something worse; surely the dildo would provoke leering—at least rude or suggestive laughter, she'd thought. But she was in the land of the lingam—or so she imagined. Wasn't the phallic symbol worshipped here? Nancy thought she'd read that the penis was a symbol of Lord Shiva. Maybe what Nancy carried in her purse was as realistic (albeit exaggerated) a lingam as these men had ever seen. Maybe she'd made an unholy use of such a symbol—was that why these men wanted nothing to do with her? But the constables and the customs inspector weren't thinking of lingams or Lord Shiva; they were simply appalled at the portable penis.

Nancy was left to find her own way out of the airport and into the shrill cries of the taxiwallas. An unending line of taxis extended into the infernal blackness of this outlying district of Bombay; except for the oasis that was the airport, there were no lights in Santa Cruz—there was no Sahar in 1969. It was about three in the morning.

Nancy had to haggle with her taxiwalla over the fare into Bombay. After she arranged the prepaid trip, she still encountered some difficulty with her driver; he was a Tamil, apparently new to the city. He claimed not to understand Hindi or Marathi; it was in uncertain English that Nancy heard him asking the other taxiwallas for directions to the Taj.

"Lady, you don't want to go with him," one of the taxiwallas told her, but she'd already paid and was sitting in the back seat of the taxi.

As they drove toward the city, the Tamil continued a lengthy debate with another Tamil driver, who drove his taxi perilously close to theirs; for several miles, they drove like this—past the unlit slums in the immeasurable predawn darkness, wherein the slum dwellers were distinguishable only by the smell of their excrement and their dead or dying fires. (What were they burning? Rubbish?) When the sidewalks on the outskirts of Bombay first appeared, still without electric light, the two Tamils raced side by side—even through the traffic circles, those wild roundabouts—as their discourse progressed from an argument to a shouting match to

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threats, which sounded (even in Tamil) quite dire to Nancy.

The seemingly unconcerned passengers in the other Tamil's taxi were a well-dressed British couple in their forties. Nancy guessed they were also headed to the Taj Mahal Hotel, and that this coincidence lay at the heart of the dispute between the two Tamils. (Dieter had warned her of this common practice. Two drivers with two separate fares, headed for the same place: naturally, one of the drivers was attempting to persuade the other driver to carry both fares.)

At a traffic light, the two stopped taxis were suddenly surrounded by barking dogs—starving curs, all snapping at one another—and Nancy imagined that if one jumped through the window at her she could club it with the dildo. This passing idea perhaps prepared her for what happened at the next intersection, where again the light was against them; while they waited this time, they were slowly approached by beggars instead of dogs. The shouting Tamils had attracted some of the sidewalk sleepers, whose mounded bodies under their light-colored clothing could be dimly seen to contrast with the darkened streets and buildings. First, a man in a ragged, filthy dhoti stuck his arm through Nancy's window. Nancy noticed that the prim British couple—not in fear but out of sheer obstinacy—had closed their windows, despite the moist heat. Nancy thought she would suffocate if she closed hers.

Instead, she spoke sharply to her driver—telling him to *go!* After all, the light had changed. But her Tamil and the other Tamil were too engrossed in their confrontation to obey the traffic signal. Her Tamil ignored her, and the other Tamil now coerced his British passengers into the street; he was beckoning to them that they must join Nancy in *her* cab, exactly as Dieter had foretold.

Nancy shouted at her driver, who turned to her and shrugged; she shouted out the window to the other Tamil, who shouted back at her. Nancy shouted to the British couple that they shouldn't allow themselves to be so taken advantage of; they should demand of their driver that he bring them to their prearranged, prepaid destination.

"Don't let the bastards screw you!" Nancy shouted. Then she realized that she was waving the dildo at them. To be sure, it was still in the sock and they didn't *know* it was a dildo; they could only suppose she was a hysterical young woman threatening them with a sock.

Nancy slid over in her seat. "Please get in," she said to the British couple, but when they opened the door, Nancy's driver protested. He even jerked the car a little forward. Nancy tapped him on his shoulder with the dildo—still in the sock. Her driver looked indifferent; his counterpart was already stuffing the British couple's luggage into the trunk as the twosome squeezed into the seat beside her.

Nancy was pressed against the door when a beggar woman pushed a baby through the window and held it in front of Nancy's face; the child was foul-smelling, unmoving, expressionless—it looked half dead. Nancy raised the dildo, but what could she do? Whom should she hit? She screamed at the woman, who indignantly withdrew the baby from the taxi. Maybe it wasn't even her baby, Nancy considered; possibly it was just a baby that people used for begging. Perhaps it wasn't even a real baby.

Ahead of them, two young men were supporting a companion who was either drunk or drugged. They paused in crossing the road, as if they weren't sure that the taxi had stopped. But the taxi *was* stopped, and Nancy was incensed that her driver and the other Tamil were *still* arguing. She leaned forward and brought the dildo down across the back of her driver's neck. That was when the sock flew off. The driver turned to face her. She struck him squarely on his nose with the huge cock in her hand.

"Drive on!" she shouted at the Tamil. Suitably impressed with the giant penis, he made the taxi lurch forward—through the traffic light, which had turned red again. Fortunately, no other traffic was on the street. Unfortunately, the two young men and their slumped companion were directly in the taxi's path. At first, it seemed to Nancy that all three of them were hit. Later, she distinctly remembered that two of them had run away, although she couldn't say that she'd actually seen the impact; she must have closed her eyes.

While the Englishman helped the driver put the body in the front seat of the taxi, Nancy realized that the young man who'd been hit was the one who'd appeared to be drunk or drugged. It never occurred to her that the young man might already have been dead when the car hit him. But this was the subject of the Englishman's conversation with the Tamil driver: had the boy or young man been pushed into the path of the taxi deliberately, and was he even conscious before the taxi struck him?

"He *looked* dead," the Englishman kept saying.

"Yes, he is dying before!" the Tamil shouted. "*I* am not killing him!"

"Is he dead now?" Nancy asked quietly.

"Oh, definitely," the Englishman replied. Like the customs inspector, he wouldn't look at her, but the Englishman's wife was staring at Nancy, who still clutched the fierce dildo in her fist. Still not looking at her, the Englishman handed her the sock. She covered the weapon and returned it to her big purse.

"Is this your first visit to India?" the Englishwoman asked her, while the crazed Tamil drove them faster and faster through the streets now more and more blessed with electric light; the colorful mounds of the sidewalk sleepers were visible all around them. "In Bombay, half the population sleeps on the streets—but it's really quite safe here," the Englishwoman said. Nancy's pinched expression implied to the British couple that she was a newcomer to the city and its smells. Actually, it was the lingering smell of the baby that pinched Nancy's face—how could something so small reek with such force?

The body in the front seat made its deadness known. The young man's head lolled lifelessly, his shoulders impossibly slack. Whenever the Tamil braked or cornered, the body responded as heavily as a bag of sand. Nancy was grateful that she couldn't see the young man's face, which was making a dull sound against the windshield—his face rested flush against the glass—until the Tamil cornered again and then accelerated.

Still not looking at Nancy, the Englishman said, "Don't mind the

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body, dear." It seemed unclear whether he'd spoken to Nancy or to his wife.

"It doesn't bother me," his wife answered.

Over Marine Drive, a thick smog hung suspended, as warm as a woolen shroud; the Arabian Sea was veiled, but the Englishwoman pointed to where the sea should have been. "Out there is the ocean," she told Nancy, who began to gag. Overhead, on the lampposts, not even the advertisements were visible in the veil of smog.

"I'm going to throw up," Nancy said.

"If you don't *think* about being sick, dear, you won't *be* sick," the Englishwoman said.

The taxi departed Marine Drive for the narrower, winding streets; the three living passengers leaned in to the corners, and the dead boy in the front seat appeared to come alive. His head walloped the side window; he slid forward and his face glanced off the windshield, which skidded him into the Tamil driver, who elbowed the body away. The young man's hands flew up to his face, as if he'd just remembered something important. Then, once again, his body appeared to forget everything.

There were whistles, piercing sharp and loud: these were the sounds of the tall Sikh doormen who directed the traffic in the driveway of the Taj Mahal Hotel. The one available policeman was engaged in scolding a Swedish tourist who'd bribed a beggar to urinate on the Gateway of India; the Swede had wanted to photograph the urchin pissing on this landmark of the Raj. The dead boy in the taxi had to wait. Finally, when the policeman was free, the Tamil driver became hysterical; a dead man had been thrown into the path of his car—apparently, there was a dent. The British couple confided to the constable that the Tamil had run a red light upon being struck by a dildo. It wasn't clear to Nancy if the British couple was blaming her for the accident, if it had been an accident. After all, the Tamil and the Englishman agreed that the boy had looked dead before the taxi hit him. What was clear was that the policeman didn't know what a "dildo" was.

"A penis—a rather large one," the Englishman explained to the constable.

"She?" the policeman asked, pointing to Nancy. "She is hitting the taxiwalla with a *what*?"

"You'll have to show him, dear," the Englishwoman told Nancy.

"I'm not showing him anything," Nancy said.

An hour later—Nancy had just finished soaking in a cool bath—a second policeman came to her room. This one wasn't a constable—no blue shorts a yard wide, no silly leg warmers. He wore an officer's cap with the Maharashtrian police insignia on it, and a khaki shirt, long khaki pants, black shoes, a revolver. He was the duty officer from the Colaba Police Station, which has jurisdiction over the Taj. Sporting a pencil-thin mustache, young Inspector Patel gave a good first impression. The qualities of a future deputy commissioner could be discerned in his composure.

Inspector Patel was aggressive but courteous; even then, in his twenties, he was an intimidating detective, in that he invited a certain misunderstanding of his questions. His manner persuaded you that he already knew the answers to many of the questions he asked, although he usually didn't; thus, he encouraged you to tell the truth by implying that he already knew it. And Inspector Patel's method of questioning carried the added implication that he could discern your moral character somewhere within your answers.

In her current state, Nancy was vulnerable to such an uncommonly proper and pleasant-looking young man. Inspector Patel did not present himself as a person whom even a brazen or supremely self-confident young woman would *choose* to show a dildo to. Also, it was about five in the morning. Below Nancy's room and balcony, the light was the pale-brown color of an eggshell, barely illuminating the usual gathering of beggars—child performers, for the most part. To international travellers like Nancy, who were still staggered by jet lag, these early-morning urchins were the first daylight contact with India.

Nancy sat at the foot of her bed in her bathrobe. The inspector sat in the only chair not strewn with her clothes or her bags. They could both hear the emptying of Nancy's bath. Highly visible, as Dieter had advised, were the used-looking but unused guidebook and the unread novel by Lawrence Durrell.

It was not uncommon, the inspector told her, for someone to be murdered and then shoved in front of a moving car. In this case, what was unusual was that the hoax had been so obvious.

"Not to me," Nancy told him. She explained that she'd not seen the moment of impact; she'd thought all three of the pedestrians were hit—probably because she'd shut her eyes.

The Englishwoman hadn't observed the moment of impact, either, Inspector Patel informed Nancy. "She was looking at you, instead," the policeman explained.

"Oh, I see," Nancy said.

The Englishman was quite sure that a body—at least an unconscious body, if not a dead one—had been pushed into the path of the oncoming car. "But the taxiwalla doesn't know what he saw," said Inspector Patel. "The Tamil keeps changing his story." When Nancy continued to stare blankly at him, the policeman added, "The driver says he was distracted."

"By what?" Nancy asked, although she knew by what.

"By what you hit him with," Inspector Patel replied.

There was an uncomfortable pause while the policeman looked from chair to chair, surveying her emptied bags, the two books, her clothes. Nancy thought he must be at least five years older than she was, although he looked younger. His self-assurance made him seem disarmingly grown-up; yet he didn't exhibit the cocksure arrogance of most cops. Inspector Patel didn't swagger; there was something in his controlled mannerisms that sprang from an absolute correctness of purpose. What struck Nancy as his pure goodness was riveting. She thought he was a wonderful coffee-and-cream color; and he had the blackest hair—such a thin, perfectly edged mustache that Nancy wanted to touch it.

The over-all nattiness of the young man stood in obvious contrast to that absence of vanity which is commonly associated with a happily married man. Here in the Taj, in the presence of a buxom blonde in a short bathrobe, Inspector Patel was obviously unmarried; he was as alert to the details of his appearance as he was to every inch of Nancy, and to the

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particular revelations of Nancy's room. She didn't realize he was looking for the dildo.

"May I see the thing you hit the taxiwalla with?" the inspector asked finally. God knows how the idiot Tamil had described it. Nancy went to get it from the bathroom, having decided to keep it with her toilet articles. God knows what the British couple had told the inspector. They'd doubtless described her as a rude young woman brandishing an enormous cock.

Nancy gave the dildo to Inspector Patel, and again sat down at the foot of her bed. The young policeman politely handed the instrument back without looking at her.

"I'm sorry—it was necessary for me to see it," Inspector Patel said. "I was having some difficulty *imagining* it," he explained.

"Both drivers were paid their fares at the airport," Nancy told him. "I don't like to be cheated," she said.

"It's not the easiest country for a woman travelling alone," the inspector said. By the quick way he glanced at her, she understood this was a question.

"Friends are meeting me," Nancy told him. "I'm just waiting for them to call." (Dieter had advised her to say this; anyone assessing her student clothing and her cheap bags would know that she couldn't afford many nights at the Taj.)

"So will you be travelling with your friends or staying in Bombay?" the inspector asked her.

Nancy recognized her advantage. As long as she held the dildo, the young policeman would find it awkward to look in her eyes.

"I'll do what they do," she said indifferently. She held the penis in her lap; with the slightest movement of her wrist, she discovered, she could tap the circumcised head against her bare knee. But it was her bare feet that appeared to transfix Inspector Patel; perhaps it was their impossible whiteness, or else their improbable size—even bare, Nancy's feet were bigger than the inspector's little shoes.

Nancy stared at him without mercy. She enjoyed the prominent bones in his sharp-featured face. She thought he had the blackest eyes and the longest eyelashes.

Still staring at Nancy's feet, Inspector Patel spoke forlornly: "I suppose there's no phone number or address where I could reach you."

Nancy felt she understood everything that attracted her to him. She'd certainly tried hard to lose her innocence in Iowa, but the football players hadn't touched it. She'd spoiled her real innocence in Germany, with Dieter, and now it was lost for good. But here was a man who was still innocent. She probably both frightened and attracted him—if he even knew it, Nancy thought.

"Do you want to see me again?" she asked him. She thought the question was ambiguous enough, but he stared at her feet—with longing and horror, she imagined.

"But you couldn't identify the other two men, even if we found them," said Inspector Patel.

"I could identify the other taxi-driver," Nancy said.

"We've already got him," the inspector told her.

Nancy stood up from the bed and carried the dildo to the bathroom. When she came back, Inspector Patel was at the window, watching the beggars. She didn't want to have any advantage over him anymore. Maybe she was imagining that the inspector had fallen hopelessly in love with her and that, if she shoved him on the bed and fell on top of him, he would worship her and be her slave forever. Maybe it wasn't even *him* she wanted; possibly it was only his obvious propriety, and this she only wanted because she felt she'd given away her essential goodness and would never get it back.

He was no longer interested in her feet; now he kept glancing at her *hands*. Even though she'd put away the dildo, he wouldn't look in her eyes.

"Do you want to see me again?" Nancy repeated. There was no ambiguity to her question now. She stood closer to him than was necessary, but he ignored the question by pointing to the child performers far below them.

"Always the same stunts—they never change," Inspector Patel remarked.

Nancy refused to look at the beggars; she continued to stare at him. "You could give me your phone number," she said. "Then I could call you."

"But why would you?" the inspector asked her. He kept watching the beggars. Nancy turned away from him and stretched out on the bed. She lay on her stomach with the robe gathered tightly around her. She thought about her blond hair; she thought it must look nice, spread out on the pillows, but she didn't know if Inspector Patel was looking at her. She just knew that her voice would be muffled by the pillows, and that he'd have to come closer to the bed in order to hear her.

"What if I need you?" she asked

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him. "What if I get in some trouble and need the police?"

"That young man was strangled," Inspector Patel told her; by the sound of his voice, she knew he was near her.

Nancy kept her face buried in the pillows, but she reached out to the sides of the bed with her hands. She'd been thinking that she'd never learn anything about the dead boy—not even whether the act of killing him had been wicked and full of hatred or merely inadvertent. Now she knew—the young man couldn't have been inadvertently strangled.

"*I didn't strangle him,*" Nancy said.

"I know that," said Inspector Patel. When he touched her hand, she lay absolutely motionless; then his touch was gone. In a second, she heard him in the bathroom. It sounded as if he was running a bath.

"You have big hands," he called to her. She didn't move. "The boy was strangled by someone with small hands. Probably another boy, but maybe a woman."

"You suspected *me*," Nancy said; she couldn't tell if he'd heard her over the running bathwater. "I said, you suspected *me*—until you saw my hands," she called to him.

He shut the water off. The tub couldn't be very full, Nancy thought.

"I suspect everybody," Inspector Patel said, "but I didn't really suspect you of strangling the boy."

Nancy was simply too curious; she got up from the bed and went to the bathroom. Inspector Patel was sitting on the edge of the tub, watching the dildo float around and around like a toy boat.

"Just as I thought—it floats," he said. Then he submerged it; he held it under the water for almost a full minute, never taking his eyes off it. "No bubbles," he said. "It floats because it's hollow," he told her. "But if it came apart—if you could open it—there would be bubbles. I thought it would come apart." He let the water out of the tub and wiped the dildo dry with a towel. "One of your friends called while you were registering," Inspector Patel told Nancy. "He didn't want to speak with you—he just wanted to know if you'd checked in." Nancy was blocking the bathroom door; the inspector paused for her to get out of his way. "Usually, this means that someone is interested to know if you've passed safely

HISTORY: THE HOME MOVIE

Three episodes conclude our selection from the author's novel in verse about the fate of two families—one Russian, one English.

BY CRAIG RAINE

1937: DU BIST WIE EINE JUDE

A six-place white bone-china setting,
set for Fedya, Zhonya, Karlchen, Lenchen.
No guests. And no female servants

since the law today forbidding
Aryan girls all jobs in Jewish households.
Lest paterfamilias get familiar.

And Karlchen is inconsolable:
Ilse whom he loves has left,
without a reason. Just goodbye.

Because Karlchen and Lenchen
have no idea they are Jews,
that their father, Frederick,

vice-president of the Vereinsbank,
is etc. etc. Their mother, too.
Only Fedya looks as if etc. etc.

The plates of lentil soup,
identical, a daisy chain
of Koenigszell Silesian china,

getting cold as Karlchen cries
thick, acid tears, his hot face
constipated with emotion.

She is sixteen, he is six.
Hugging her knees in bed,
the patient exposition of her past,

its endless intricate etc. etc.,
and when she lets her earphones down,
she lets him feel her flaxen flex,

and what he feels is love,
"when even if the journey's long
it only takes a minute."

The thought of her teeth,
crooked, white, wet,
the unbroken bow of her eyebrows,

and he is shaken with silent sobs
like the hiccups of boats
at their moorings.

It is snowing outside:
rivel-ravel cross-eyed ticker tape.
The curtains are open.

Then stillness and the soufflé
on the saddle of a bike.
Karlchen crying like a taxi.

To cheer him up, the butler, Heinrich,
impersonates a one-man band.
Never known to fail.

Each hand shakes a silver tablespoon
stuck in a bottle, while he bangs
the door behind him with his heel,

spraying spittle from his lips
which fart the "tune." A "tune."
Definitely the indefinite article.

And when this distraction doesn't work?
Lenchen loses patience with her brother:
Du bist wie eine Jude! Scathingly.

Fedya. Zhonya. Karlchen. Heinrich.
Silence and the snow's drop-shadow lettering.
Lenchen. The buzz of conversation stopped.

1941: MAWCARSE

Let me try to put you in the picture.
Action painting. What a bally mess.
How best to piece things together?

We could start with a definition.
How do you define a Scotsman?
A Geordie with his brains bashed out.

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We could search for the dead
by the light of our cigarettes.
One of the injured is smoking a fag

but something is seriously wrong.
He exhales smoke from everywhere
except his mouth, like a Turkish bath.

Love moans come from the wounded.
The whole of his battle-dress top
is oozing fog like a freezer.

I should explain where we are.
Mawcarse is an R.A.F. bomb dump
in a guarded pine wood.

Smashed, it smells of disinfectant.
Bunting, bits of battle-dress,
branches fluttering with flesh.

Peaceful as a Shinto shrine.
Where were we now?
Between Kinross and Milnathort.

I could say who I am:
that trickling sensation,
which might be blood. Or sweat.

Or tears. Or something else.
Last night, tonight, was Hogmanay,
and the squad got wrecked.

Legless. Bombed. Out of their skulls.
Which is why Norman looks pissed,
soused enough to be singing,

O tell me the truth, Mother,
tell me the truth,
do kippers swim folded or flat?

Cross-eyed, unable to focus,
black tongue, fuddled feet,
tomorrow he'll be on a fizzer.

They'll charge him with malingering,
with bloody Munchausen's, because
he isn't bleeding from the ears.

He has a triple-fractured skull,
internal bleeding, and, in days,
acute suppurative meningitis.

He's awa in the heid. Wandering.
Down by the stream. Birdsong.
All the willows washing their hair.

The perfect plumage of pine cones.
A threadbare spider's web. Fucked.
Big black cock in his kisser.

Oot on it. Completely fucked.
In 28 days, he'll forget the lot:
falling out of the jeep,

two field-hospital operations,
let alone his letter to Olive
from sick quarters in camp.

"Head injured by a piece of coal."
His handwriting. Signed it "Geordie."
He hasn't the faintest idea.

1946: REUNION

Still stencilled with swastikas,
front-wheel casings like spats,
peristaltic, single prop,

a Focke-Wulf 190 at Luton
shimmies in the shock of heat,
waiting for Natasha Kroll:

priority flight to Paris,
arranged by Simpson's. Purpose:
fashions for the Christmas windows.

(And meeting her mother,
missed for almost ten years.)
Perfume and petrol

in the cockpit's blister.
The joke of being a Jew
in a German warplane. Laughter.

Petite. A touch of Tartar
in her sloping olive-stone eyes.
The mapping-pen exactness

of her eyebrows' India ink.
Features cleverly asymmetric.
Skin fine as Rizla papers.

She is wearing a Simpson's suit:
five-button, neat gray check.
And an overcoat with Astrakhan trim,

curly as walnut, slightly waisted,
gold glass rosebud buttons.
Her dark red hat is on her lap

so headphones can be worn
and the pilot proposition her
with dinner, dancing, drinking,

with offers to explain
in detail the etymologies
of jazz and joystick.

Offers she cannot refuse
because her mike switch is kaput.
Headphones in her lap,

two Bakelite bluebottles,
intermittent, indecent, over
and out, she thinks of England:

of hydrangeas in Hyde Park,
subtle shades of litmus,
of helter-skelter whelks at Brighton,

of taking her parents to Lords,
of a cricket ball in wet outfield
like a circular saw,

of anything English. *Novy mir.*
Aus der neuen Welt.
And when she holds her mother tight,

the fierce love she feels
exists with irritation. As of old.
Love has broken a rosebud button. ♦

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through customs. Therefore, I thought you were bringing something in. But you weren't, were you?"

"No," Nancy managed to say.

"Well, then, as I leave, I'll tell the hotel to give you your messages directly," the inspector said.

"Thank you," Nancy replied.

He'd already opened the door to the hall before he handed her his card. "*Do* call me if you get into any trouble," he told her. She chose to stare at the card; it was better than watching him leave. There were several printed phone numbers, one circled with a ballpoint pen, and his printed name and title.

VIJAY PATEL
POLICE INSPECTOR
COLABA STATION

After she'd read and reread the policeman's card, Nancy went out to the balcony and watched the beggars for a while. The children were enterprising performers, and there was a monotony to their stunts that was soothing. Like most foreigners, she was easily impressed by the contortionists.

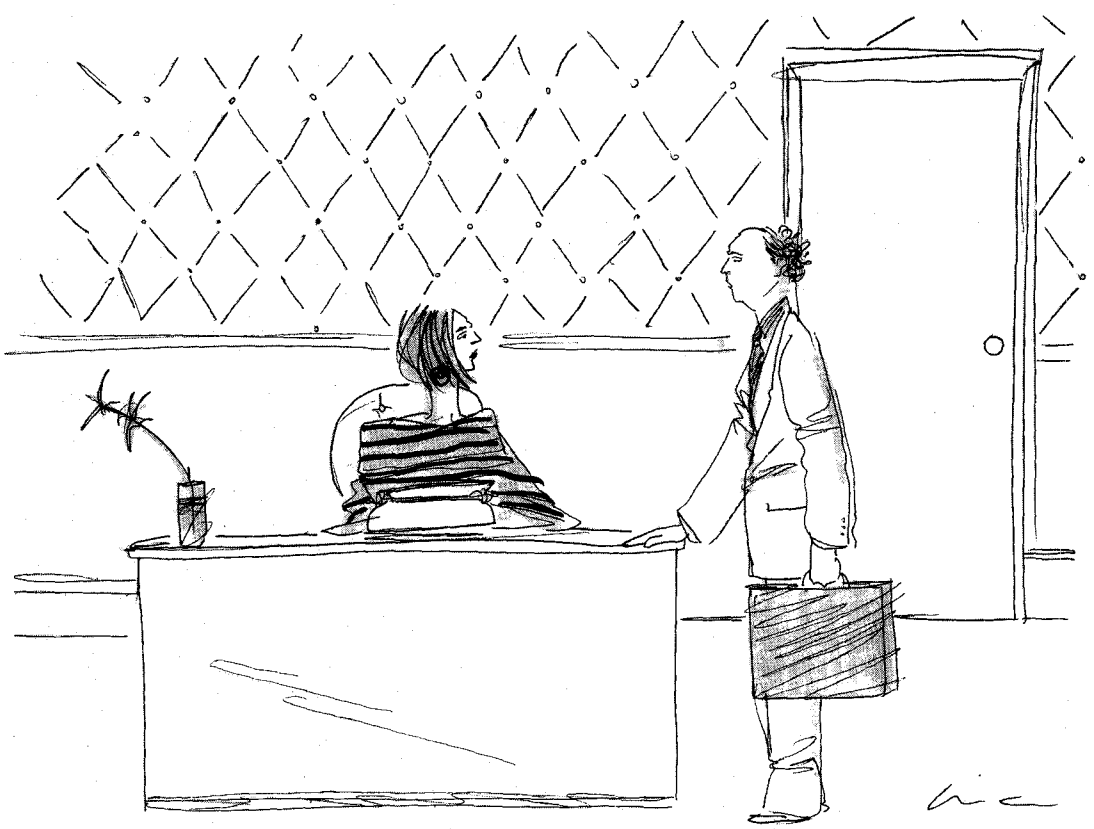
Later, Nancy ordered the most American thing she could find on the room-service menu—scrambled eggs and toast—and when they brought her tray, she saw a sealed envelope propped between the orange juice and the tea. Her heart jumped; she hoped it was a declaration of undying love from Inspector Patel. But it was the message from Dieter that the inspector had intercepted; it said simply that Dieter had called. He was glad she'd arrived safely; he'd see her soon.

She was ravenous, and as soon as she'd finished eating, she was sleepy. She closed the curtains against the light of day and turned up the ceiling fan as fast as it would go. For a while she lay awake, thinking of Inspector Patel. She even entertained the idea of Dieter being caught with the money as he tried to pass through Indian customs. Nancy was still naïve enough to imagine that the Deutsche marks were coming into the country with Dieter. It hadn't crossed her mind that she'd already brought the money in.

It seemed to her that she slept for days. It was dark when she woke. She would never know if it was the predawn darkness of the next day, or of the day after that. She awoke to some sort of commotion in the hall outside her room; someone was trying to get in, but she'd double-locked the door and there was a safety chain, too. She got out of bed. There, in the hall, was Dieter; he was surly to the porter, whom he sent away without a tip. Once inside the room, but only after he'd double-locked the door and hooked the safety chain in place, he turned to her and asked her where the dildo was. This wasn't exactly gallant of him, Nancy thought, but in her sleepiness she supposed it was merely his aggressive way of being amorous. She pointed to it in the bathroom.

Then she opened her robe and let it slip off her shoulders and fall at her feet; she stood in the bathroom doorway, expecting him to kiss her, or at least look at her. Dieter held the dildo over the sink; he appeared to be heating the unnatural head of the penis with his cigarette lighter. Nancy woke up in a hurry. She picked up her bathrobe and put it back on; she stepped away from the bathroom door, but she could still observe Dieter. He was careful not to let the flame blacken the dildo, and he concentrated the heat not at the tip but at the place where the fake foreskin was cropped. It then appeared to Nancy that he was slowly melting the dildo; she realized that there was a substance—it looked like wax—dripping into the sink. Where the fake foreskin was cropped, there emerged a thin line, circumscribing the head. When Dieter had melted the wax seal, he ran the tip of the big penis under cold water and then grasped the circumcised head with a towel. He needed quite a lot of force to unscrew the dildo, which was hollow, as Inspector Patel had observed. The wax seal had prevented any air from escaping; there'd been no bubbles underwater. Inspector Patel had been half right; he'd looked in the right place, but not in the right way—a young policeman's error.

Inside the dildo, rolled very tightly, were thousands of Deutsche marks. For the return trip to Germany, quite a lot of high-quality hashish could be



"Fred Wills from Fred Wills."

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packed very tightly in such a big dildo; the wax seal would prevent the dogs at German customs from smelling the Indian hemp inside.

Nancy sat at the foot of the bed while Dieter removed a roll of marks from the dildo and spread the bills out flat in his hand. Then he zipped the marks into a money belt, which was around his waist and under his shirt. He left several sizable rolls of marks in the dildo, which he reassembled; he screwed the tip on tight, but he didn't bother resealing it with wax. The line where the thing unscrewed was barely visible anyway; it was partially hidden by the fake foreskin. When Dieter had finished with this, his chief concern, he undressed, and filled the bathtub. It wasn't until he'd settled into the tub that Nancy spoke to him.

"What would have happened to me if I'd been caught?" she asked him.

"But they wouldn't have caught you, babe," Dieter told her. He'd picked up the "babe" from watching American movies, he'd once said.

"Couldn't you have *told* me?" Nancy asked him.

"Then you would have been nervous," Dieter said. "Then they *would* have caught you."

After his bath, he rolled a joint, which they smoked together; although Nancy thought she was being cautious, she got higher than she wanted to, and just a little disoriented. It was strong stuff; Dieter assured her that it was by no means the best stuff—it was just something he'd bought en route from the airport.

"I made a little detour," he told her. She was too stoned to ask him where he could have gone at two or three in the morning, and he didn't bother to tell her that he'd gone to a brothel in Kamathipura. He'd bought the stuff from the madam, and, while he was at it, he'd fucked a thirteen-year-old prostitute for only five rupees. He was told she was the only girl not with a customer at the time, and Dieter had fucked her standing up, in a kind of hall, because all the cots in all the cubicles were occupied—or so the madam had said.

After Dieter and Nancy smoked the joint, Dieter was able to encourage Nancy to masturbate; it seemed to her that it took a long time, and she couldn't remember him leaving the bed to get the dildo. Later, when he was asleep, she lay awake and thought for a while about the thousands of Deutsche marks that were inside the thing that had been inside her. She decided not to tell Dieter about the murdered boy or about Inspector Patel. She got out of bed and made sure the card the inspector had given her was well concealed among her clothes. She didn't go back to bed; she was standing on the balcony at dawn when the first of the beggars arrived. After a while, the same child performers were perfectly in place, like figures painted by the daylight itself.

They made her cry. She went back inside the room and watched Dieter while he was sleeping. She thought again about the thousands of Deutsche marks; she wanted to throw them out the window to the child performers, but it frightened her to imagine the terrible scene she might cause. (The hotel guests usually threw bananas or oranges to the beggars—or, at best, one or two rupees. The urchins wouldn't know what to do with a dildo full of Deutsche marks.) Nancy then went into the bathroom and tried to unscrew the dildo to count how many marks were inside, but Dieter had screwed the thing too tightly together. This was probably deliberate, she realized; at last, she was learning.

She went through his clothes, looking for the money belt—she thought she could count how many marks were there—but she couldn't find it. She lifted the bedsheet and saw that Dieter was naked except for the money belt. It worried her that she couldn't remember falling asleep, nor could she remember Dieter getting out of bed to put the money belt on. She would have to be more careful, she thought. Nancy was beginning to appreciate the extent to which Dieter might be willing to use her; she worried that she'd developed a morbid curiosity about how far he would go.

Nancy indulged herself with the comforting notion that she could turn to Inspector Patel if she needed him, if she was *really* in trouble. If things get *too* bad, Nancy thought, I can just pick up the phone and ask for Vijay Patel—Police Inspector, Colaba Station.

Although the morning was now intensely bright, Nancy didn't close the curtains; in the light of day, it was easier for her to imagine that leaving Dieter was merely a matter of picking the right time. But Nancy had never been to the East. She didn't know where she was. She had no idea. ♦

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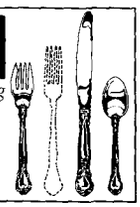

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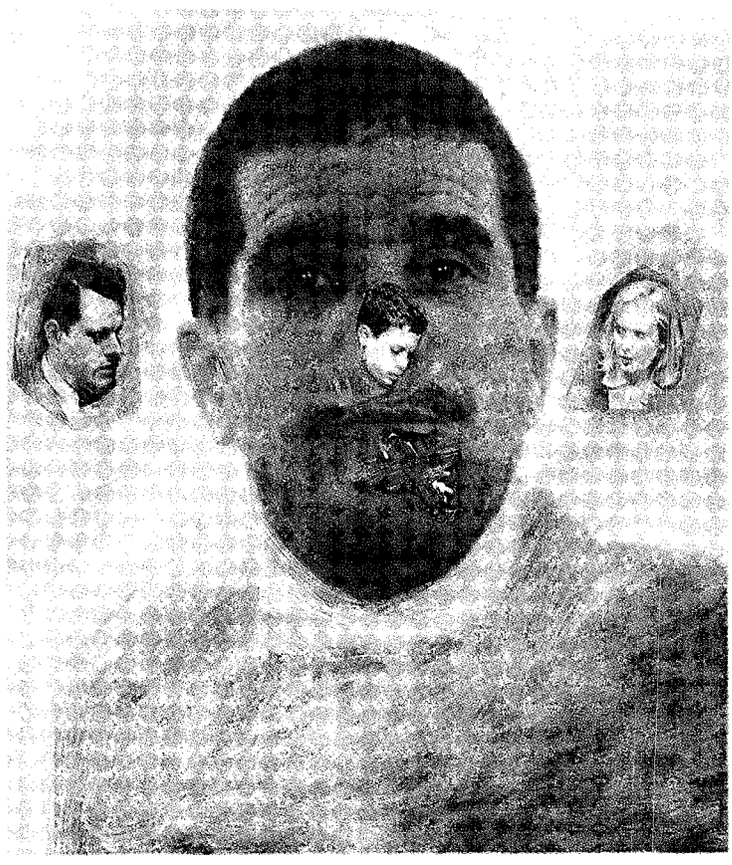
THE CRITICS

THE THEATRE

BETRAYALS

BY JOHN LAHR

DAVID MAMET, like the characters he puts onstage, tells us only so much about himself, and no more. We know, for instance, that he likes tricksters and magic. We know that he enjoys guys' things, like hunting and poker and cigars. We also know that he's divorced, and that, like any divorced parent, he has had to live with the grief of imposing on his children the bewildering pain of separation which he felt when his own parents divorced. In "The Rake," the first chapter of a 1992 memoir entitled "The Cabin: Reminiscence and Diversions," Mamet has provided a rare and chilling snapshot of himself and his sister, Lynn, growing up with their new stepfather in a Chicago suburb. Mamet dredges up from the mystery of childhood a few images and scraps of half-understood conversation which have etched themselves on his imagination. He tells of his sister's hearing raised voices and following them down the corridor to the master bedroom, where she pushed open the door to see their mother coiled in a fetal position on the floor of the closet "moaning and crying and hugging herself," and their tyrannical stepfather gesturing toward the bed, on which the children's grandfather, their mother's father, was slumped. "Say the words," the stepfather was saying to the grandfather. "Say the words, Jack. Please. Just say you love her." Mamet writes, "And my grandfather said, 'I can't.'" Mamet's sister was hit in the face with a hairbrush for bearing witness to this humiliation. Such bleak and brutal terrain—full of cloaked threat and blighted feeling—is a large part of Mamet's emotional inheritance. He survived to dramatize its wary and perverse psychological climate—a ferocious, repressed atmosphere in which, out of fear and impotence and shame, people become willed strangers to themselves, and in which the cunning thrust and parry of language becomes a carapace that cuts them off from both the world and their own murky feelings.



David Mamet's "The Cryptogram" unravels the charade of human connection.

"The Cryptogram," Mamet's newest play, which recently had its world première at the Ambassadors Theatre, in London, is a difficult but important drama, in which Mamet works his way back to childhood—specifically, to that irrevocable, buried moment in a child's life when the safety net of the parental embrace collapses, and the world, once full of blessing, is suddenly full of danger. The play, which consists of three terse scenes, takes place in 1959 (Mamet was born in 1947), and Mamet's surrogate, John, is "about ten." Bob Crowley's beautifully painted set is dominated by a huge stairway, which winds its way up toward the flies, and a backcloth of behemoth zones of blue-green and charcoal gray separated by a band of pink. Like a Rothko painting (which the backcloth resembles), the play is about the resonance of contra-

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dictory and puzzling emotional intensities; and the staircase becomes an image of the almost unbridgeable space between the muffled grownup world downstairs and the child's insecure purdah upstairs.

Mamet foreshadows the play's moral debate in the opening beats. Here, in Gregory Mosher's vivid production, John's first words are "I couldn't find 'em." John (superbly played by the precocious Richard Claxton, who alternates in the role with the equally adroit Danny Worters) is apparently talking about a pair of slippers he has packed for a camping trip with his father, which is scheduled for the next day; but what John really can't find in the environment of subterfuge and coded speech which engulfs him is the reality of his parents and of his own emotional life. John can't sleep. This is a familiar enough childhood complaint, and the family friend Del (well played by the grudgy, weak-faced comedian Eddie Izzard) tries to jolly him out of it in a cozy late-night man-to-man. "Where were we?" Del asks. John answers with a formal phrase obviously borrowed from earlier arguments with the adults. "Issues of sleep," he says. The phrase turns panic into a debating point, but we soon learn that John's sleeplessness is chronic. "*Every* night. *Every* night. There's some excuse. Some *reason*," says Donny, John's mother, played by the subtle Lindsay Duncan, whose pale elegance here disguises a steely detachment. Despite Del's special pleading and the excitement of the upcoming trip, Donny wants John upstairs and in bed. "Why aren't you asleep?" is her entrance line. John has picked up some anxiety that the household refuses to acknowledge. "Why isn't Dad home?" he asks Del, who takes the conversation in another direction. Later in the scene, John tells his mother, "I want to wait til he comes home." His request is stonewalled by apparent reasonableness. "Well, yes, I'm sure you do," Donny says. "But you need your sleep. And if you don't get it, you're not . . ."

Sleeplessness, not John's fear, is what Del and Donny want to contain. No one deals with John's feelings or tries to alleviate them. The audience starts to feel a certain highly charged and unspoken frustration—a kind of emotional static. Mamet puts the audience where the child sits, taking the characters at face value, only to have its will to believe confounded by those characters' mixed messages. Psychological truth is never acknowledged. In fact, it is scrambled—like a cryptogram—so that everything means something else. The play's uncluttered living room, composed merely of two sofas covered with red blankets, becomes an impenetrable landscape of denial. Mamet announces the pattern brilliantly, with the offstage crash of Donny's teapot, which precedes her first entrance. "I'm alright!" Donny shouts from the wings. "I'm alright!" Clearly she's not all right, and Del uses the shattered teapot to draw an avuncular parallel between the anticipated camping trip and John's edginess:

> DEL: Well, there you go.
> JOHN: What?
> DEL: . . . a human *being* . . .
> JOHN: . . . yes?
> DEL: . . . cannot conceal himself.
> JOHN: that, that's, that's an example?
> DEL: Well, hell, look at it: anything, when it is *changed* . . . *any*, um um, "upheaval," do you see? All of a sudden . . .

A broken teapot an "upheaval"? Del seems to be trying to ascribe John's sleeplessness to the prospect of a change of scenery, but his stumbling and inappropriate choice of words is confusing. Something—everything—is being concealed. But what? Nothing is ever directly stated. Even John's straightforward question about his father—"Where is he?"—gets a confused and confusing answer from Donny. "I don't know. Yes, I do, yes. He's at the Office. And he'll be home soon." She seems to know, and yet not to know, that something is awry. John's situation is never resolved; his anxieties and his questions are never answered. When John is sent to tidy up the attic, and reappears with a blanket—a totemic family object in which he was wrapped as a baby—the blanket turns out to be torn. John thinks he has torn it, but Donny knows he hasn't. Even this projection of John's unspoken fear of having caused a rip in the fabric of the family is muddied by Del. "Because we *think* a thing is one way does not mean that this is the way that this thing must be," Del says. The evasions are confusing, and are meant to be. John's caretakers interrupt him, and confound him with doubletalk. At the end

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of the scene, John's worst fears are confirmed. A note somehow materializes. "When did this get here?" Donny asks, and after she's read it she sends John to bed. "Alright. I understand. I'm going," he says, knowing, without quite knowing, that the worst has happened. His father will not be going on the camping trip, or coming home. The dialogue that ends the first scene has a flat, matter-of-fact tone, but in the subsequent scenes it turns out to be part of a whole narrative of fraudulence:

DEL: What is it?
DONNY: It's a letter. (*Pause.*) Robert's leaving me.
DEL: He's leaving you. (*Pause.*) Why would he want to do that . . . ?

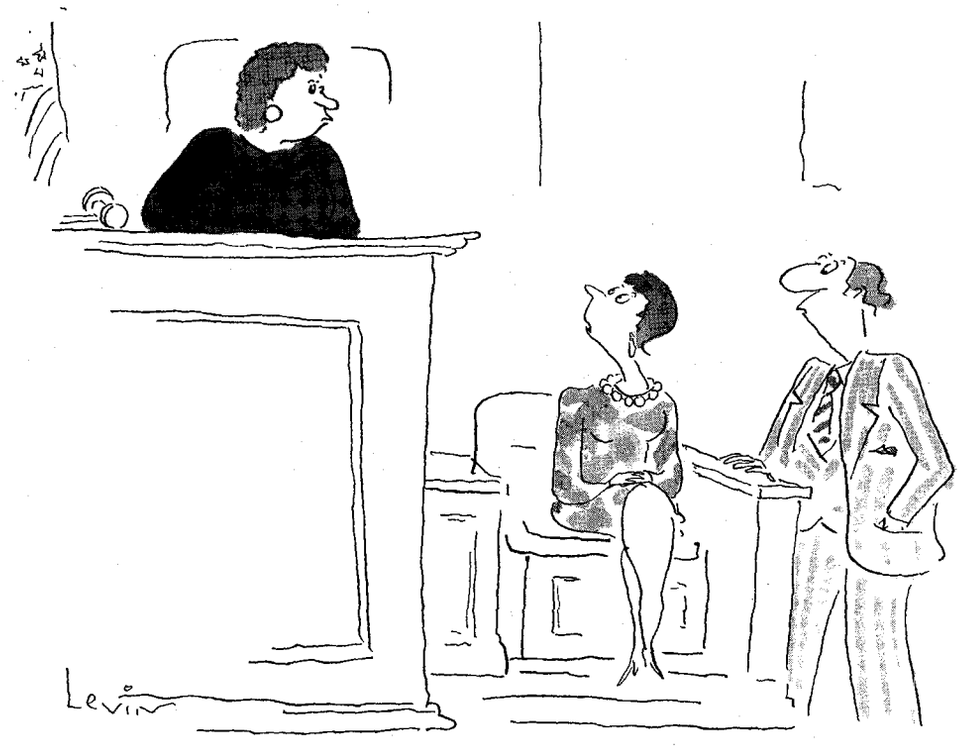
"I thought that maybe there was nothing there," John says to Donny at the beginning of Scene 2, explaining a kind of brainstorm about the nature of reality. And, of course, he's right: what Mamet is about to unravel is the charade of human connection. John is starting to fragment before our eyes, and his night sweats—in this case, voices and spectres that accompany his fear of abandonment and his sense of annihilation—are now coming out in his questions. "And how do we *know* the things we know?" he says. "And, and we don't know what's real. And all we do is *say* things." What Del says when he enters is that he has looked all over town for Robert and can't find him. He brings medicine for John. (The medicine that John really needs is love, but this is never offered.) John finally breaks down and buries his head in his mother's lap. "What's happening to me?" he says. Donny embraces him. "It's alright," she says. "Hush. You go to bed. It's alright. John. Shh. You've only got a fever. Shhh." It's a fierce and ironic moment: an act of violence couched in the language of love. Donny acts as if the truth would kill her son, but what's killing him is untruth.

The truth—a network of betrayals—is hard to admit or discover. Once John is safely upstairs, Del opens a bottle of whiskey, and he and Donny toast their friendship—a kind of strangulated toast, in which Del, who is gay but later confesses love for Donny, angles clumsily for some acknowledgment of deeper feeling from her:

DONNY: May We Always be as . . .
DEL: Yes.
DONNY: As . . .
DEL: Unified . . .
DONNY: Well, let's pick something more moving than that.
DEL: Alright . . . be. be. be. be. be-*nighted*? No, that's not the word I want to use . . . be-*trothed* . . . ? No.
DONNY: Close . . .
DEL: Yes.
DONNY: Close to each other.
DEL: As we happen to be right now.

Within a few minutes, though, De is caught out in a lie about a knif he has used to open the whiskey. H claims that Robert gave it to him on camping trip the previous week, bu Donny has seen it more recently, in attic. This leads to the revelation tha Del lent Robert his apartment for tryst and used the camping trip as a de coy—a collusion for which he was re warded with the knife, Robert's cher ished "war memento," which prove later to be as inauthentic as Del's show of sincerity. Del, it turns out, is caugh between an allegiance to the absen Robert and a yearning for Donny, wh flirts with him but is finally uninter ested. The audience hardly has time t tally up the extent of his fabrication Del, who planted the "Dear Donny letter, has known all along about Rob ert's adultery and abandonment of h family. Del's badinage with John, th story about looking for Robert, th toast to Donny and friendship—all a flimflam. "I'm sorry that it came o like this," he says to her. Then, havin deliberately lied to Donny, h proceeds to lie to himself. "B we can't always choose the . . These revelations are interrupte by John's returning from upstai to recount his own revelatio "I'm perfectly alone." And he i

We see just how alone John in the last, and best, scene, whic takes place a month later, wi Donny and John packing u to leave the house. Here, esp cially, Lindsay Duncan—o of England's finest actresses- brings Donny into bold, mo strous relief. John has suicide his mind. "Do you ever wish th you could die?" he asks his moth who replies ambivalently, "Ho can I help you, John?" She is, Mamet shows, killing him slow with kindness. "Things occu she tells him. "And the mea ing of them . . . the *meaning* them . . . is not clear." But mea ing, we see, is being conscious and unconsciously subverted. '



"Your Honor, I've already answered that question on Maury Povich's show."

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I could find one man," Donny bleats to Del, who has returned with the knife to "attune" for his sins. "In my life. Who would not betray me." Donny's rancor has a self-hypnotic power, but in fact Donny has betrayed John and Del, just as Del has betrayed Donny and John; and Robert, it turns out, has betrayed all three. When John appears on the stairway to interrupt her aria of victimization, Donny turns on her boy with unbridled fury. "Do you have no *feelings*?" she says. "I don't CARE. Go away. Leave me. Do you hear? You *lied*. You *lied* to me. I love you, but I can't like you. I'm sorry." Of course, it's Donny (and the other adults) who has lied to John; but John stands there, bewildered, trying vainly to make himself heard above Donny's double binds. All he wants is the blanket—his security blanket—but it has been packed. In a gesture typical of the adults' psychological obtuseness, Del gives John the knife to open the package. John, who has already broadcast suicidal thoughts, is called to attention on the stairway by Donny; she doesn't want to disarm him but, instead, to accuse him furiously of doing to *her* what she in fact is doing to him. "What are you *standing* there for?" she says. "Can't you see that I need *comfort*? Are you *blind*? Are you *blind*? That you treat me like an *animal*? What must I do?" It is a searing moment of emotional abuse. At the finale, John is looking down over the bannister at Donny and Del. He flicks the knife. The blade jolts into view with a startling *thwack*—a chilling sound that holds out the promise, as the lights fade, of murderous fury directed at John himself or at the world.

Mamet chose to attack the world, and "The Cryptogram" goes some way toward illuminating the source of the cruelty and faithlessness that his characters generally find in it. The shifting ground of the play makes it hard to engage with, but its aftershock is enormous. "The Cryptogram" may be short, but it is not miniature. The oblique, brilliant dialogue is not underwritten, nor are the characters unexplored. With remarkable concision and insight, Mamet has mapped out the dynamics of a soul murder. This daring, dark, complex play got respectful though mixed notices in London, but I suspect that in time it will take its place among Mamet's major works. ♦

THE THEATRE

BAWDY NIGHT

BY NANCY FRANKLIN

THE name Aphra Behn doesn't come up every day, but when it does two facts about her seem to follow automatically: that she was the first Englishwoman to earn a living as a writer, and that Virginia Woolf, in "A Room of One's Own," said of her, "All women together ought to let flowers fall upon the tomb of Aphra Behn, for it was she who earned them the right to speak their minds." Behn lived from 1640 to 1689 and was, after Dryden, the most prolific Restoration playwright, but in the mid-eighteenth century her work fell out of favor. For two hundred years, Behn was in eclipse, but the last decade has seen several productions of her best-known play, "The Rover," a celebration of free choice—for women as well as men—in matters of the heart and of the body. The latest revival is one of the summer offerings at Minneapolis's Guthrie Theatre, and it's a skeptical and funny look at the way things stand now between the sexes.

Set in Spain during the pre-Lenten carnival, the play is, as the director, JoAnne Akalaitis, says in a program note, "basically about a group of rich, innocent, but sexually curious girls and a group of tough, biker-type guys who come into town." Behn set the play in Naples; transferring the action to Spain gives Akalaitis the opportunity to begin with some attention-riveting flamenco dancing and to set a tone of frank earthiness. Three sisters—Florinda, Hellena, and Valeria—all dressed in white, waft up through trapdoors in the stage and begin discussing their romantic dilemmas. Florinda loves Belvile, one of a band of English cavaliers who are passing through, but her brother wants her to marry a local worthy. Hellena is supposed to become a nun, but she'd rather find a man, and during the carnival she sets her sights on Willmore, the rover of the title. At one point, the sisters sneak a smoke together, and it's clear that these good girls have just enough badness in them to get what they want. Hellena, in particular, has an unquenchable spirit; as played by the pixieish Elizabeth Marvel, she's a combination of Courtney Love and Gidget.

The production makes the plot somewhat confusing: several scenes play more to the retina than to the brain, and Willmore (Jesse Sinclair Lenat) and another of the rovers, with their long hair and metal-head leather attire, look almost as much alike as those bearded guys in ZZ Top. And because Willmore, who attempts to rape Florinda, comes across as a sociopathic good-time Charlie, there's little joy to be had when Hellena wins this booby prize. It's mainly through spectacle and buffoonery and frequent flashes of wit that Akalaitis makes the play's points. Christopher Bayes, playing a goony country squire named Blunt, who is tagging along with the rovers and is dressed in clownish oranges and reds, provides the most unbridled piece of slapstick, first fumbling with a condom and then inflating it until it grows to, oh, about thirty-six inches, and then twisting it into the shape of a dog. (I guess this is as good a time as any to mention two gigantic bubblegum-pink fabric penises, like Brobdingnagian wind socks, that emerge through the floor just before intermission.)

Akalaitis engages the audience in the spectacle of the play right from the start: some fifty paying customers dressed in bright-red carnival costumes sit on bleachers at the back of the stage. And she's made the carnival scenes breathtaking. As lights bounce off the wild, glittering costumes, and rhythmic music plays, a red floor-to-ceiling scrim swoops downstage and curves up on a track, over the heads of the audience, to the back of the theatre. Actors pop back and forth through slits in the scrim. But in dividing the audience from itself and from some of the actors Akalaitis actually brings everyone together. You can't help thinking, What are those people over there seeing? Can they see what I see? Akalaitis says that the device forces the audience to "work a bit," but in fact the scrim tantalizes and quickens the senses, as if it were a giant sail billowing up and propelling the audience and the actors on an amazing voyage. ♦

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THE CURRENT CINEMA

AMAZING ODDS

BY TERRENCE RAFFERTY

ANDREW BERGMAN'S sweet-spirited comedy "It Could Happen to You" tells us right away that it's going to be a fairy tale: the picture's first words—spoken in a deep, soothing voice by an onscreen narrator named Angel (Isaac Hayes)—are "Once upon a time in New York City." When filmmakers use the "once upon a time" ploy, they're generally setting us up for something, lulling us with slow stuff so they can sneak the fastball by. And the pitches that Bergman and the screenwriter, Jane Anderson, want us to swing at are way out of the strike zone. The plot hinges on a New York State Lottery ticket worth four million dollars, and by the time the movie is over the manna from Albany seems the least of the miracles that we've been asked to believe in. The "it" of the film's hopeful title refers to a romantic windfall, not a financial one; this is, more or less, the same magical "it" that happened one night, in 1934, to Clark Gable and Claudette Colbert.

Tipoff: Bridget Fonda, Nicolas Cage, and Rosie Perez in "It Could Happen to You."

The lucky winners in Bergman's picture are a cop named Charlie Lang (Nicolas Cage) and a diner waitress named Yvonne Biasi (Bridget Fonda)—a pair of generous, honest, kindhearted working-class lovers who might have seemed too good to be true even in one of Capra's sunny populist comedies. In New York in the nineties, in a studio picture, the odds against the convergence of two such gentle souls are astronomical. They're the sort of characters who don't figure in moviegoers' fantasies anymore, because in the prevailing terms of Hollywood fantasy people like Charlie and Yvonne are small-timers, losers. "It Could Happen to You" has the audacity to portray the blue-collar decency of its hero and heroine as heroic, and even sexy. The fairy-tale message here is a real whopper: good things happen to good people. That's a wild pitch, but it's one that most of the audience probably won't mind getting fooled by. (There's some satisfaction, at least, in knowing that Bergman had to reach back for something extra.)

"It Could Happen to You" doesn't have the lunatic highs of Bergman's previous pictures: there's nothing to rival Bert Parks' tuxedoed rendition of "Maggie's Farm" in "The Freshman," or the skydiving Elvis impersonators smoothing the course of true love at the climax of "Honeymoon in Vegas." This is the first movie he has directed from someone else's script, and at times you can feel him struggling to repress his more outré comic impulses—reluctantly passing up opportunities for gags, for fear of breaking the picture's rather fragile romantic mood. (At the lottery winners' press conference, nine members of an Albany bowling team, all whooping it up in bright-yellow shirts, come and go quickly, leaving only a faint, poignant whiff of Bergman's flying-Elvis mode.) The challenge of this story is to maintain the audience's belief in—and sympathy with—these impossibly, anach-

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ronistically virtuous lovers; Bergman has his hands full. Charlie isn't just a good cop but an ideal one: he's fearless and unbribable; he's not interested in career advancement, because he gets so much satisfaction from helping the people he comes across on his beat; in his spare time, he plays stickball with the kids in his multi-ethnic Queens neighborhood; he's such a prince that he won't even exploit his authority to jump to the head of very long lottery-ticket line—he waits his turn, like a regular Joe. Yvonne is cut from the same humble but sturdy cloth. She came to New York, we're told, to be an actress, but discovered that being a waitress was her true calling, and she's not at all bitter or disappointed about settling for a less glamorous occupation. She's proud of what she does, and deserves to be; she's especially cheerful and solicitous when she's serving customers who really need her human warmth, like homeless people and AIDS sufferers. When Charlie and Yvonne meet, they're obviously destined to lose their hearts of gold to each other; they're two in a million.

By rights, they should be nauseating; and if Bergman had cast earnest, straight-arrow types to play them, they certainly would be. But Cage and Fonda are performers with unique, helplessly eccentric styles, and their individual oddities enable the movie to get away with this perilously idealized relationship. Cage gazes at Fonda with his characteristic look of stricken canine ardor, Fonda flashes back one of her radiantly loopy grins, and we realize that the rightness of this couple's union is inseparable from its plain weirdness. "It Could Happen to You" treats its lovers' goodness as a species of screwball-comedy idiosyncrasy, and the movie brings them together by means of an explicitly ridiculous contrivance. Charlie, embarrassed that he can't come up with a tip for Yvonne (whom he has just met), offers to share with her whatever he wins on his lottery ticket; and when the value of his whimsical tip proves to be two million dollars Charlie actually makes good on his promise. The money comes out of the blue, but the hero's integrity seems to come from someplace even farther out; Charlie's greedy wife, Muriel (Rosie Perez), has a much easier time believing that they've won a ton of money than believing that he's going to keep his word to a virtual stranger. Charlie's ethical purity is so automatic and so unself-conscious that it's funny, and the capper to the movie's central joke is that the accidental beneficiary of his nutty probity is perhaps the one woman in New York City who truly shares it. And she's beautiful.

As the movie bounces along, Charlie inevitably moves away from the nagging Muriel—played by Perez as a hilarious caricature of a beady-eyed financial predator—and toward his newly discovered soul mate, Yvonne. Muriel buys herself expensive clothes and jewelry, garishly remodels their modest apartment (solely to jack up its resale value), and plots investment strategies. Charlie and Yvonne spend their time and money on spontaneous acts of generosity, like distributing free tokens to rush-hour subway riders and renting Yankee Stadium to play baseball with a bunch of kids. Muriel's behavior, outrageously awful as it is, isn't tough to understand: her avid pursuit of wealth and social status seems pretty much the reigning cultural norm. Charlie and Yvonne are out of step with everyone but each other, and their mysterious rapport is what makes these hard-to-believe characters so delightfully credible as lovers. The peculiar truth of screwball comedy is that every romance worthy of the name is inherently goofy and inscrutable; the joy that Charlie and Yvonne take in doing good has the erotic quality of a shared secret, a ticklish pleasure that only they know about. At one point, when it looks as if Muriel had got the better of both of them, Yvonne blurts out to Charlie, "We should leave New York—we're like freaks here," and that funny, intimate statement is probably the clearest expression of this movie's bizarre romantic spirit.

Although "It Could Happen to You" is a much more intelligent and heartfelt attempt to resuscitate dormant romantic-comedy values than last year's mechanical "Sleepless in Seattle," Bergman and Anderson don't manage to conquer the modern-day viewer's skepticism completely. In order to contrive a rousing happy ending, they require us to accept one fairy-tale plot twist too many. Having persuaded us to buy the existence of two lovable, selfless paragons, they then ask us to believe that there are several thousand other generous, kindly folks at large in the metropolis. At its climax, "It Could Happen to You" crosses the line into never-happen territory. That final misstep is dismaying, but it isn't disas-

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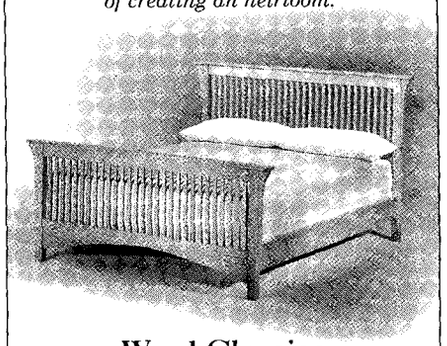

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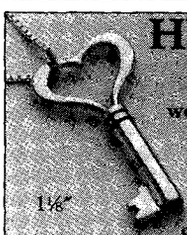

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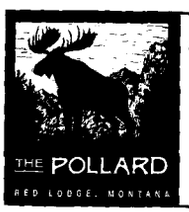

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trous. The movie's comic warmth lingers, like the pleasant, sun-dazed sense of unreality you feel on a summer afternoon at the ballpark.

MOVIES based on John Grisham's best-selling legal thrillers have been coming at us with alarming regularity since last summer, when "The Firm" was released. Grisham pictures seem to have been designed to fill some sort of market niche for the peak moviegoing seasons: both "The Firm" and "The Pelican Brief," a Christmas release last year, were clearly meant to supply respectable, middle-of-the-road excitement to middle-aged viewers—white-collar suspense for audiences who find violent action movies a bit distasteful. This summer's model, "The Client," is simpler and junkier than its predecessors, both of which ground forward with the stately, deliberate pace of the wheels of justice themselves, and it's easily the best of the three; it's the first Grisham-based thriller that actually lowers itself to provide a thrill or two. The director, Joel Schumacher, isn't noted for finesse—his previous works include "St. Elmo's Fire," "Flatliners," and "Falling Down"—and his crude, gut-level style is surprisingly effective here. "The Client" is still safe-as-houses entertainment, but it isn't suffocatingly genteel.

The plot is a familiar, reliable action generator: innocent citizen stumbles on some incriminating information about the Mob, and runs like hell. The reluctant witness in "The Client" is an eleven-year-old Memphis boy, Mark Sway (Brad Renfro). Putting a kid in danger isn't exactly a fresh story idea, either, but the story manages to keep the action interesting, and even mildly unpredictable, by introducing a different sort of threat to the young hero's well-being in the form of an ambitious and implacable D.A. named Roy Foltrigg (Tommy Lee Jones), who wants Mark to tell what he knows, and pursues him through the courts like the Hound of Heaven with a briefcase. Mark has been told, by a lawyer about to commit suicide, where the body of a politician murdered by the Mob is buried. Neither the crooks nor the law-enforcement team headed by Foltrigg can be sure that Mark knows anything, and the kid, sensibly, feels that the wisest strategy is to keep everyone guessing; if he can avoid being compelled to testify under oath, maybe he can succeed in staying alive. To that end, he presents himself in the unprepossessing office of a lawyer named Reggie Love (Susan Sarandon), who agrees to represent him. Essentially, she adopts him. She protects her frightened client with a ferocity that goes far beyond her professional obligations; her legal duel with the steely Foltrigg has a tense air of emotional consequence, like a desperate, drawn-out custody battle. After a while, Grisham's square chase-picture plot begins to seem like just a narrative expedient, a useful frame for a witty and fairly original idea: when the law operates like a stern, cold father, your best defense is a strong-willed mom.

Sarandon and Renfro work so beautifully together that Jones—playing, superbly, a role that's in the range of his memorable "Fugitive" character—doesn't steal the movie. When Sarandon gets a meaty part like this one, the movie is hers; there isn't an actor alive who could take it away from her. Her Reggie is a toned-down variant of the fighting-mom character she played in "Lorenzo's Oil"; there's a lot more humor in this performance, but her acting still has an almost shocking intensity. Renfro seems like a natural; his readings are clear and unmannered, and his rapport with Sarandon is completely persuasive. Both Mark and Reggie are smart and stubborn; their exchanges have a sort of exasperated tenderness that captures precisely the comic edginess of relations between mothers (even surrogate mothers) and sons. The screenwriters, Akiva Goldsman and Robert Getchell, supply Sarandon and Renfro with terrific dialogue for their scenes together. Unfortunately, the writers saddle Reggie with quite a bit more "motivation" than the character needs. She is a mother who has lost custody of her own children because of her history of drug and alcohol abuse. (She is, of course, clean and sober now.) This background is supposed to explain the strength of her dedication to Mark's case, but it's a mistake to try to trace her behavior to such a mundane personal source. When we look at Sarandon, we see Reggie's maternal heroism as a force of nature, not merely a force of circumstance. "The Client" is a solid piece of work, but someone should have told the filmmakers not to cross-examine their heroine. ♦

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BOOKS

MARVELL AND MOTORCYCLES

BY A. ALVAREZ

Collected Poems
by Thom Gunn
(Farrar, Straus & Giroux; $35)

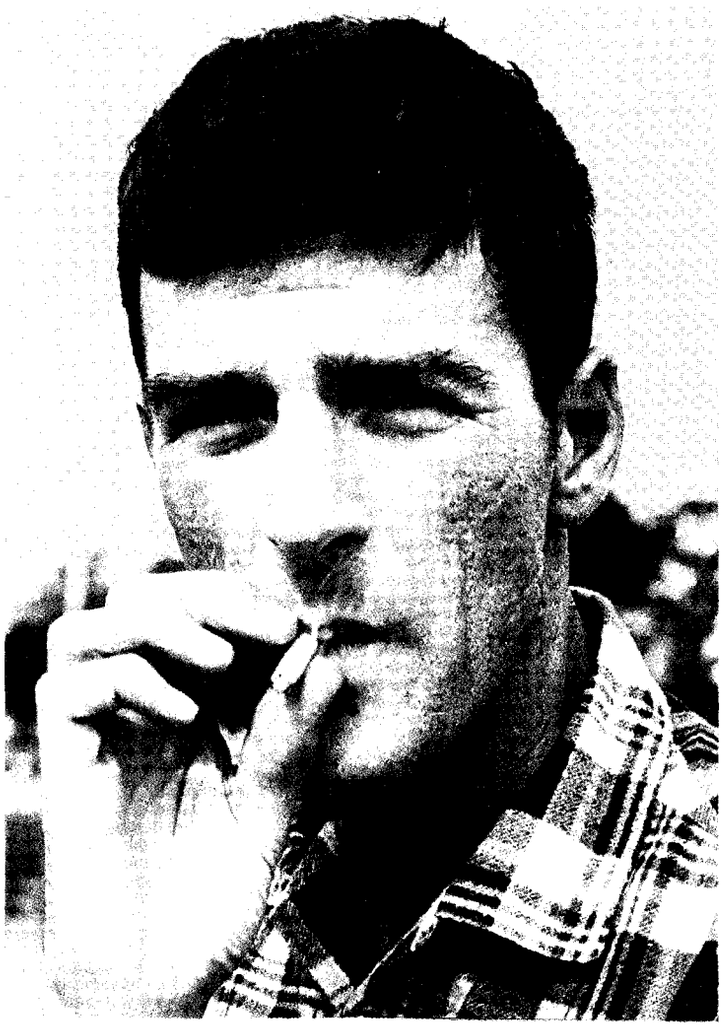
THOM GUNN published his first collection of poems, "Fighting Terms," in 1954. He had graduated from Cambridge the previous year, but nearly all the poems in the book had been written while he was still an undergraduate. I was at Oxford at the time, and even now I can remember the mixture of astonishment, pleasure, and plain envy with which I first read a poem by Gunn in one of the little magazines we all wrote for. It was called "Helen's Rape," and it began with a "Now hear this" authority that reminded me of John Donne:

> Hers was the last authentic rape:
> From forced content of common breeder
> Bringing the violent dreamed escape
> Which came to her in different shape
> Than to Europa, Danaë, Leda:
>
> Paris. He was a man . . .

This, I thought (and still think), was what the new poetry should sound like—powerful, allusive, knowing, written with the arrogant assurance of a young poet who has something original to say and an authentic voice to say it in, loud and clear.

The poems in "Fighting Terms" seemed especially miraculous in England in the miserable nineteen-fifties. Times were hard all over, of course: in the States, Senator McCarthy and the House Un-American Activities Committee were on the rampage, and Stalinists ruled the roost in the Latin Quarter as well as in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. Yet in retrospect the fifties in the United States have begun to look like the decade when the American dream came true: a time of prosperity, full employment, moral certainty, and calm, poor on civil rights but strong on civil rectitude—a kind of well-mannered and well-managed paradise, soon to be lost. It was also prime time for the arts in America: the Abstract Expressionist painters were at their peak, and a dazzling generation of young writers were hitting their stride—Lowell, Berryman, Roethke, Cheever, Bellow, Mailer, Malamud, Roth, Updike.

It wasn't like that in England. The country was exhausted by the battering it had taken in the war and demoralized by the loss of its empire and its status as a world power, and life in general was pinched and deprived. The conveniences Americans took for granted—plentiful food and central heating—were still luxuries that most British citizens scarcely dreamed of and secretly despised. In those pre-Thatcher days, the British were not yet interested in pig heaven. On the contrary, deprivation suited them fine. It was what they had been trained for—particularly the males of the species who had done time at expensive boarding schools. The Battle of Waterloo was won on the playing fields of Eton, but only because Waterloo was a picnic after the rigors of Eton. A century and a half later, military life still felt like a spell at the Ritz to boys who had just left public schools. Reticence and rationing came to them naturally; enthusiasm made them wince. For Brits visiting the States, American abundance was as suspect and as hard to comprehend as the American intellectual appetite and generosity of spirit. We Brits had behaved wonderfully during the war—with unflinching patience and good humor—but after the fighting was over the wartime mentality lingered on: always apologize, never complain, but don't let the bastards grind you down. (The spirit of that impoverished time is caught best in Ealing comedies like "The Lavender Hill Mob" and "Kind Hearts and Coronets," with their mixture of geniality and slyness, inertia and disrespect.)



Thom Gunn's poems about the ravages of AIDS recapture his original passion and brilliance.

This taste for deprivation had a deadening effect on literature in general and poetry in particular. What passed for the latest movement in English verse in the mid-fifties—the nine poets included in

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Robert Conquest's 1956 anthology, "New Lines," were, in fact, labelled "The Movement"—was glumly unadventurous. In Movement terms, the ideal poem was like a well-made essay; it had a beginning, a middle, and an end, and it made a point. It was carefully rhymed, rhythmically inert, and profoundly complacent. The one poet in the anthology who was able to make something original out of the restrictions of the style was Philip Larkin—a master of the wry, self-deprecating put-down and slangy half rhymes ("sod all" with "untransferable"). But, as everyone now knows, Larkin himself was mired in drabness, and seemed to have truly believed that life was as parsimonious with opportunities as he was with his own resources. He was a brilliant craftsman, and he had a beady understanding of his own limitations, but generosity was not his style, either in spirit or in practice. If he had a philosophy of life—although the very idea of anything so high-flown would have made him shrink—it was summed up in one of his gloomy aphorisms: "Sex is much too wonderful an experience to share with anybody else."

Thom Gunn was born in 1929, seven years after Larkin, which meant that he was less easily resigned to the constraints that those who had come of age during the war took for granted. Some of his poems appeared in "New Lines," but only one of them was from "Fighting Terms," and this was an untypically mild little number called "Lerici," about the difference between Shelley, who was "submissive" in his drowning, and Byron, with his mastery of the destructive element. "Lerici" lacked the jolting rhythmical aggression of poems like Gunn's "Lofty in the Palais de Danse"—"You are not random picked. I tell you you /Are much like one I knew before, that died"—or the mysterious power of "The Wound":

> The huge wound in my head began to heal
> About the beginning of the seventh week.
> Its valleys darkened, its villages became still:
> For joy I did not move and dared not speak . . .

In their different ways, all the best poems in "Fighting Terms"—"The Wound," "The Secret Sharer," and "Carnal Knowledge"—are about that huge wound in Gunn's head; that is, they are about psychic pain, about the difficulties of growing up and coming to terms with your own identity.

Gunn had more than his fair share of difficulties to come to terms with. His mother had died when he was fifteen, and his relationship with his father—a notoriously hard-nosed journalist, who edited a London tabloid—was uneasy. Then, while Gunn was at Cambridge, he came to the conclusion that he was homosexual. In the buttoned-up nineteen-fifties, when the homosexual act, even between consenting adults, was a criminal offense (so was attempted suicide), this was a tough decision. It was tougher still at Cambridge, where the most powerful figure in the English department was F. R. Leavis. Like Matthew Arnold, Dr. Leavis believed that literature was a moral discipline, a substitute for religion. His hero was D. H. Lawrence, and behind the key terms and catchphrases solemnly parroted by Leavis's disciples—"maturity," "reverence," "poise," "the quality of felt life," "the free play of the vital intelligence"—lurked the belief that the moral and spiritual welfare of society was in the hands of us literary folk. We lusted after responsibility, and in the fifties responsibility meant marriage—the wife, the kids, the little home, the dog. Marriage (even a quarrelsome, unhappy marriage like that of Lawrence and Frieda) was the ultimate vindication of literary seriousness. According to Joan Didion, who was at Berkeley around that time, "we were the last generation to identify with adults."

Gunn was no exception, but his sexual preferences seem to have confused the issue for him: when homosexual activity is considered a criminal offense, how can the potential offender maintain a comfortable attitude toward moral seriousness and responsibility? Out of that confusion, I think, the best poems emerged. Gunn himself prefers not to see it that way. "I rejoice in Eliot's lovely remark that art is the escape from personality," he wrote in 1979, in an essay about his life and poetry. He added, in a postscript:

> In my early twenties I wrote a poem called 'Carnal Knowledge,' addressed to a girl, with a refrain making variations on the phrase 'I know you know.' Now anyone aware that I am homosexual is likely to misread the whole poem, inferring that the thing 'known' is that the speaker would prefer to be in bed with a man. But that would be a serious misreading, or at least a serious misplacement of emphasis. The poem, actually addressed to a fusion of two completely different girls, is not saying anything as clear-cut as that. A reader knowing nothing about the author has a much better chance of understanding it.

I wonder. "Carnal Knowledge" is a fierce and upsetting poem, and whether or not it is autobiographical is beside the point. The poem works because it expresses a conflict everybody understands:

> Even in bed I pose: desire may grow
> More circumstantial and less circumspect
> Each night, but an acute girl would suspect
> That my self is not like my body, bare.
> I wonder if you know, or, knowing, care?
> You know I know you know I know you know. . . .
>
> Leave me. Within a minute I will stow
> Your greedy mouth, but will not yet to grips.
> 'There is a space between the breast and lips.'
> Also a space between the thighs and head,
> So great, we might as well not be in bed.
> I know you know I know you know I know.
>
> I hardly hoped for happy thoughts, although
> In a most happy sleeping time I dreamt
> We did not hold each other in contempt.
> Then lifting from my lids night's penny weights
> I saw that lack of love contaminates.
> You know I know you know I know you know.

Anyone educated in England's sexually segregated schools did not have to read Freud to know that we are all to a certain extent bisexual. Yet that is not an idea people accept easily—maybe not even Gunn himself at the time. So when he came to write his autobiographical essay, a quarter of a century later, perhaps he was less bothered by the possibility that "Carnal Knowledge" might, with hindsight, be knowingly misread than by the suspicion that he had lacked good faith when he was young, and had either deliberately misled his readers or deceived himself about his true feelings. Yet in terms of the poem those hesitations are beside the point. What matters is that his ambiguous feelings allow him to express thrillingly the dividedness and dissatisfaction we all sometimes feel when we are in bed with the wrong person.

By 1957, when Gunn published his second collection, "The Sense of Movement," he had made his choice, and, as though to insure that there would be no further misreadings, he prefaced the book with a quotation from Corneille

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"*Je le suis, je veux l'être.*" To come out of the closet, even in a foreign language, was a bold gesture in the fifties, yet once the decision was made a curious, marmoreal calm settled on Gunn's verse. Gunn had always been an intensely literary poet. In those days, of course, when English was still an embattled subject in the universities—it had none of the status of "serious" disciplines like classics and the sciences—everyone who studied it was literary to a degree that seems unimaginable now that English Departments are vast and theory-ridden and so uninterested in value judgments that they teach Zane Grey and Superman more fervently than Shakespeare and Milton. But even back in the days when great literature seemed to matter, Gunn was more literary than most. He had acquired his reading habits literally in the womb: his mother, he says, read the whole of Gibbon's "History" while she was pregnant with him; the house he was brought up in was full of books, and as a child he had devoured Victorian poetry and prose romances. Then came Cambridge and his total immersion in Leavis's "Great Tradition," along with his discovery (also thanks to Leavis) that "Donne and Shakespeare spoke living language to me." A couple of years later, he won a fellowship in creative writing at Stanford, where the presiding influence was another literary moralist—Yvor Winters, who believed that "the artistic process is one of moral evaluation of human experience."

Winters had his own ideas about the Great Tradition. He was a powerful critic but a minor poet, with an eccentric taste in minor poetry. He loathed Eliot and the modernist movement, and opted instead for a different twentieth-century pantheon—Robert Bridges, Adelaide Crapsey, and Elizabeth Daryush, whom he called "the finest British poet since T. Sturge Moore." (Sir Edmond Gosse dismissed Moore as "that sheep in sheep's clothing.") Above all, Winters was a formalist. He believed in reason, order, and a kind of Elizabethan appropriateness of emotion and subject matter, in what Gunn, in a Winters-like poem on Winters, called "Ferocity existing in the fence / Built by an exercised intelligence."

Gunn was one of the most talented writers to come under Winters' influence, and I do not think he was helped by it. The unease and energy that had made the early poems tick so ominously gave way to decorum, strict reasonableness, and formal grace—to smoothly flowing rhythms and bland rhymes. Gunn turned his back on England, settled in San Francisco, and began to write more explicitly about homosexuality. Yet, paradoxically, the more he wrote about the gay world—then still a marginal or forbidden subject, with its bars and predators and rent boys—the more decorous his verse became. "I was much taken by the American myth of the motorcyclist, then in its infancy, of the wild man part free spirit and part hoodlum, but even that I started to anglicize," he wrote. "When I thought of doing a series of motorcyclist poems I had Marvell's mower poems in my mind as a model." Marvell's mower poems, you will recall, are some of the most sweet-tempered and formally perfect in the language.

Gunn seemed to embody this paradox in his person. On the rare occasions when I met him, in San Francisco or London, he was dressed like Marlon Brando in "The Wild One"—T-shirt, jeans, cowboy boots, and creaking leather jacket—and yet his manner remained English in the best sense: polite, unassuming, diffident. In those days, before poetry readings became a subdivision of show biz, with rewards to match, he was doing what most poets did to make ends meet: he was teaching literature to college kids. It was a job he said he enjoyed, and one that he certainly took seriously. He produced weighty essays—on Ben Jonson, Hardy, and Fulke Greville, Sir Philip Sidney's friend—that impressed the faculty at Berkeley sufficiently for them to offer him tenure. He tried it for a year, then left, preferring to teach only enough to pay the bills while he got on with his real work—writing poetry.

Essentially, there was no great clash between his job and his vocation. Gunn's "Collected Poems" run to almost five hundred pages, and all of them have virtues that a serious teacher, like Winters, or Gunn himself, could recognize and teach: technical skill, lucidity, discipline. A large proportion of them are also rather dull. That, too, is par

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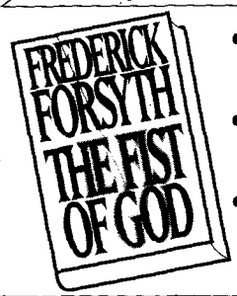

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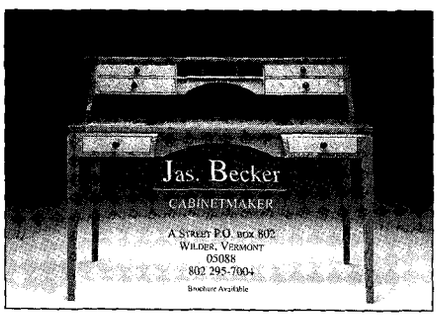

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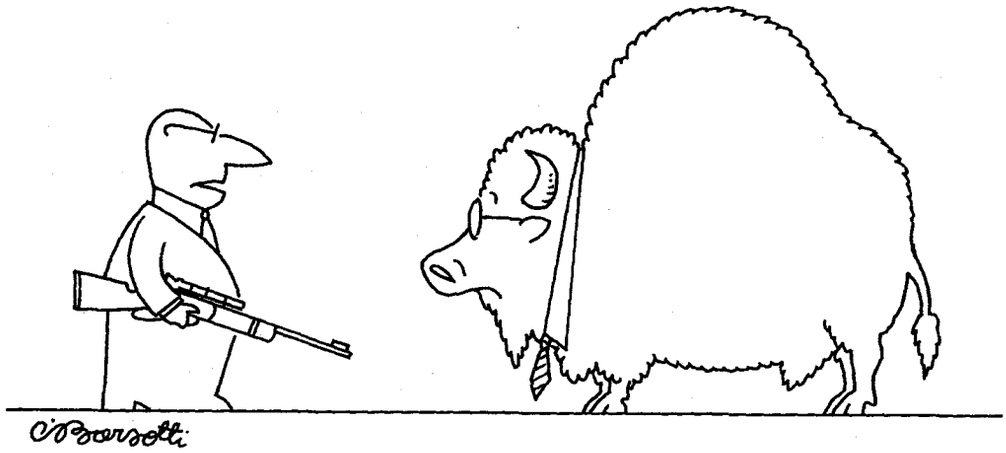

"Bad news, Mitchelson. We're downsizing."

• •

for the course. Coleridge was a great poet, but his reputation rests on five poems: "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner," "Kubla Khan," "Dejection: An Ode," "Christabel," and "Frost at Midnight"—a group that amounts to a mere fifty-five pages, or less than ten per cent of the Oxford edition of his poetical works. Some poets—Eliot was one—write very little and publish only what they think is perfect, but for most the apprenticeship never ends. They keep on writing reams of dutiful verse in order to keep the bed aired, just in case the Muse chooses to pay a visit.

Gunn spent years perfecting his craft and applying it to the gay new world he now inhabited. And he meant what he had said about Marvell's mower poems. He has a poem on surfers that might have been written by Lovelace, a poem on a young drug pusher that sounds like a seventeenth-century ballad, a poem on a gay hustler in the manner of Thomas Gray's elegy on his cat. The more outrageous the experience—LSD trips, sexual orgies, group gropes—the more fastidious the verse becomes:

I like loud music, bars, and boisterous men.
You may from this conclude I like the things
That help me if not lose then leave behind,
What else, the self.

What else, indeed, can you conclude from such plonking, stately rhythms? Well, you might also conclude that in poetry leaving behind the self is not always a virtue. Even when Gunn came under the influence of Robert Duncan, in the late sixties, and began to write free verse, his iron control didn't falter. There were occasional exceptions—for example, a miraculous poem on a cherry tree, scrupulously observed, yet full of tenderness—but mostly Gunn was off at a distance in the poems he wrote during the sixties and seventies. He was an uninvolved technician, a watcher; he watched the scene, he watched himself watching, and he watched himself being watched. It was "I know you know I know you know I know" all over again, though without the confusion, the involvement, the cost.

Maybe all that this means is that Gunn was happy in San Francisco—and happiness, for the past two centuries, has not been a great inspirer of poetry. (Even Edward Lear's comic masterpieces are fuelled by loss, regret, and distaste for his ungainly self.) But, apart from a handful of early poems, Gunn has never shown much interest in the style of exacerbated intensity that attracted his Cambridge contemporary Ted Hughes. The virtues preached by Yvor Winters suited him fine, and he summed them up in an epitaph on another Winters disciple, J. V. Cunningham:

He concentrated, as he ought,
On fitting language to his thought
And getting all the rhymes correct,
Thus exercising intellect
In such a space, in such a fashion,
He concentrated into passion.

In Gunn's case, however, passion went missing for a long time, and it returned in a different shape from that of its first visitation, when he was an undergraduate. In the mid-eighties, the AIDS epidemic hit San Francisco, and the gay community began to die. Twenty years earlier, Gunn had used strict, traditional forms to describe his acid trips, because, he wrote, "the only way I could give myself any control over the presentation of these experiences, and so could be true to them, was by trying to render the infinite through the finite, the unstructured through the structured." At the time, his plan didn't work out; the LSD poems are so rigorously structured that the experience itself becomes just another mildly intriguing event to be observed from a distance. AIDS was different. It threatened him, it threatened his way of life, and, most important, it was killing off his friends.

For Gunn to have presented this terrible time as merely terrible—that is, as "unstructured"—would have been to falsify it. And suddenly the technical skills he had labored over for so long came into their own. "The Man with Night Sweats," which was published in 1992 and ends his "Collected Poems," culminates in a series of elegies on his dead and dying friends which are as fine and clear as anything Gunn has written. Qualities in his verse which once seemed to exist in an aesthetic vacuum now serve an urgent purpose: the scrupulous attention to detail brings his friends back to life; the formal elegance dignifies their dying; the restraint has something difficult to restrain—pity for them, fear for himself.

When near your death a friend
Asked you what he could do,
'Remember me,' you said.
We will remember you.

It sounds easy, but in fact it took him decades of hard labor in the salt mines of technique and self-abnegation to write as simply as that. Gunn, who started out brilliantly and full of purpose and then seemed to lose his way, has ended up writing a handful of poems that poets like Marvell, whom he fell for in his literary youth, would have recognized and admired. In his own fastidious manner, he has joined them. ♦

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BOOKS BRIEFLY NOTED

FICTION

The Sixteen Pleasures
by Robert Hellenga
(Soho; $22)

EVERYTHING about the narrator and heroine of this novel is appealing right from the first paragraph, in which she sets out the basic facts: that she is twenty-nine and a book conservator, and has come to Florence after the famous flood, in 1966, to "save whatever could be saved, including myself." She is taken up and subsequently exploited by a Harvard big shot on the flood scene, but she moves on, landing in a cloistered convent. There she is in the dodgy position of trying to save the convent's invaluable library, not only physically but financially, through the potentially illegal sale of a volume of sixteenth-century pornographic pictures and sonnets. Although she is attracted to monasticism, her bibliographical dealings involve her instead with a sexy Italian art restorer—against whom the abbess, his cousin, warns her, saying that he has "no soul." What is amazing here is how intensely you care about everything that happens to this woman, and not just in the obvious matters of love and money: the suspense is so sharp that you find yourself checking ahead to make sure she doesn't miss a train. Like her, the book is modest, resourceful, and without malice—it is high-minded and fine. So after skipping ahead to slow your heart you go back to read each elegantly moving word.

Barrel Fever
by David Sedaris
(Little, Brown; $19.95)

THE losers who excite Sedaris's imagination—the weak, the meek, the self-righteous, the stupid, the resentful, the obnoxious, the deluded, the mean—all submit to life's indignities by clinging to the same pathetic dream: that someday they'll get even. Each of the sixteen pieces in this short, maniacal collection of stories and essays is written in the first person, and the voice is approximately the same desperate snarl no matter which crazed holder of the short end of the stick it's coming from. A dim queen calls for a boycott of the local convenience store after his attempt to get into the pants of the counter help crumbles. ("I urge you to phone Drew Pierson anytime day or night and tell him you dreamt you were sitting on his face.") A housewife clenches her perky teeth in outrage at the young Vietnamese slut who has shown up claiming to be her husband's offspring. ("She arrived in this house six weeks ago speaking only the words 'Daddy,' 'Shiny,' and 'Five dollar now.' ") An unemployed writer, acting out of desperation and a sense of the ridiculous, spends a dark Christmas toiling as a hired elf at Macy's. This last is Sedaris himself, and "SantaLand Diaries," the essay in which he describes his experience, has a satirical brazenness that holds up next to Twain and Nathanael West: "I had two people say that to me today, 'I'm going to have you fired.' Go ahead, be my guest. I'm wearing a green velvet costume; it doesn't get any worse than this. Who do these people think they are? 'I'm going to have you fired!' and I wanted to lean over and say, 'I'm going to have you killed.' "

GENERAL

A Man on the Moon: The Voyages of the Apollo Astronauts
by Andrew Chaikin
(Viking; $27.95)

THE Apollo program sent twenty-four men to the moon, among them Neil A. Armstrong, who, twenty-five years ago this month, accomplished his famed "giant leap for mankind" by taking the first human step on lunar soil. Twelve of the astronauts walked on the moon—the rest flew around it—and their tasks progressed from the demonstration that a lunar visit could be safely concluded to far-ranging scientific explorations of the moon's surface. Chaikin's narrative of the Apollo voyages, based on extensive interviews with the astronauts, is riveting—especially his account of Apollo 13, the mission that turned into a cliff-hanger when an oxygen tank exploded, crippling the spaceship on its way to the moon. He brings the astronauts to life, stripping away the gray cloak of all-American squareness in which NASA dressed them, and revealing the bright colors of their personalities and the fears and exhilarations of their remarkable journeys. They brought high competence and courage to a feat that rested on a vast political and technological enterprise. After the first couple of moon walks, public interest plummeted, and, once it became evident that the Soviet Union had opted out of the moon race, support for Apollo dissolved. Chaikin calls the Apollo program "the last great act this country has undertaken out of a sense of optimism," whereas in truth it was one of the great acts America undertook—and would sustain—only in response to the goad of Cold War competition.

On the Real Side
by Mel Watkins
(Simon & Schuster; $27.50)

THIS is a penetrating and immensely enjoyable history of African-American humor from slavery to Richard Pryor—a type of humor that white America scarcely got a real taste of until the nineteen-seventies. Watkins, a writer and former editor of the *Times Book Review*, has produced an encyclopedic overview of a subject that belongs more to the realm of folklore and legend than to that of historical archives. African-American humor has nearly always been, as Watkins points out, an underground tradition, largely because it plays off an unstated impatience with white oppression and a historical white intolerance of open laughter among blacks. But "On the Real Side" is only part treatise; it's also meant to tantalize. The reader familiar with the comedy of Flip Wilson or Damon Wayans finds himself hungering for a glimpse of the comedy of Bert Williams, "whom many consider the best comedian of all time," or of Butterbeans and Susie, or Billy Kersands. For many readers, this book will transform their conception of the character, and the source, of much American popular culture. In the midst of the uproarious crowd that gathers here, the old warhorses who have tried to account for the nature of laughter—Hobbes, Bergson, Meredith, and Freud—seem to explain still less than they ever have. ♦

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BAD HAIR YEAR

BY BOBBIE ANN MASON

"I WANT that new short haircut," H.R.C. announced, apparently to thin air. "Bangs, wings over the ears, straggling down the neck. I see it everywhere, even at that supermarket where I bought the jicama. It's simple and definite and consistent. Why do you and Bill insist that I have to keep changing my hair every day, like a stereotypical female who can't make up her mind?"

James Carville's voice shimmied out of the speakerphone. "Now, Hillary, let's not get too trendy. We need to *straddle* trends."

"But I want to *be* one of the people at the same time I'm leading them," H.R.C. said. "The art of this Presidency is leading and following simultaneously."

"I agree fuwwy, Hillary—fully. Excuse me, my mouth's full—some damn faux-Cajun Buffalo wings. Listen, real short hair is out. Politically, you nix flexibility. You alienate the ponytail crowd, the blue-haired set, all the curlicues out there. And, frankly, it looks like an insult to the moptop-challenged."

"Bill's considering this new style, too. He's weighing the options."

"Bill's hair is as coarse as a donkey's tail! His hair would bush out like a privet hedge."

"Well, we've had a hair problem ever since that Air Force One to-do," H.R.C. said as the new hair stylist she had summoned hurried into the office. "It's time to cut our losses along with our tresses."

"I could *transform* you," the hair stylist said dramatically. "What I see is shape. I look at you, and I don't see what your husband sees—or even the public. I see an abstract head waiting to be molded and sculpted into a shape. Do you want to do the shag?"

"Is that like the Mashed Potato?" H.R.C. asked.

"No, that's *Quayle's* jig!" Carville yelled. "The *haircut's* called a shag!"

"It says 'today.' It says 'nineties,' " the hair stylist said.

"My mind's made up," H.R.C. said. "Ban the bob. Show me the shag. I want the haircut Detective Chief Inspector Tennison had in 'Prime Suspect 3.' "

"Hair is deceiving," Carville said. "This mousse-and-blow-dry shag job—

what it says is 'I roll out of bed and am ready for the day, and I don't care how my hair looks, although it *happens* to look perfect.' But the deal is, it's unreliable. Look at Janet Reno. Hillary, the term 'bad-hair day' originated with the shag. With that haircut, you'll have a bad-hair *year*. It's cut funny—all frazzy and feathery. It takes a tub of mousse and a bucket of hair spray. You'll blast yourself through the ozone hole. But if you don't spray you'll look like you whacked at it in the dark with pinking shears. With that haircut, you wake up in the morning with cowlicks that the cow didn't know you had."

"I've only got one little cowlick," H.R.C. said. "I used to hold it down with a headband. Let's get George's assessment."

"Don't even think it!" Carville cried. "Stephanopoulos has Dagwood Bumstead hair."

"Winona Ryder has the shag," H.R.C. argued.

"For crying out loud, Hillary," Carville said. "So does Ken Burns. You want to look like Ken Burns? This haircut makes me think of aliens invading the Rose Garden. It's like a face-eating virus. Or honeysuckle. Everybody on the planet is going to end up with the shag. But it won't look right on most people."

"Oh, get a life, Carville," H.R.C. said. "Can't you think about anything but hair? I'm trying to move us *beyond* hair. I have work to do. Where's that hair guy?"

The hair stylist was chatting with the hair-appointments secretary. They were moving their hands through the air like belly dancers, molding and sculpting.

"Believe me, Hillary," Carville said. "What you'll get with this haircut is rooster tails. You'll catch a few winks in the limo and jerk awake looking like a powerboat race."

"We'll make it a theme," H.R.C. said. "We'll have fun with it. We'll redo the Blue Room with shag carpeting. We'll bring back shag dancing." She looked at her watch. "Hey, I've got to shag on down to Union Hall."

"Rooster tails, mark my words," Carville muttered. "Politically *not* pretty."

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